

Thomas Eakins and the Swimming Picture

THOMAS EAKINS AND THE SWIMMING PICTURE



Thomas Eakins and the Swimming Picture

Edited by Doreen Bolger and Sarah Cash

AMON CARTER MUSEUM, FORT WORTH

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Foreword and Acknowledgments

This study examines a single painting that is now widely regarded as an American masterpiece: *Swimming*, completed in 1885 by the Philadelphia artist Thomas Eakins (1844–1916). The painting, a timeless depiction of leisure amidst the enjoyment of nature, evokes what Eakins' friend and contemporary, the poet Walt Whitman, termed "the divine average": the celebration of the individual in society. Whitman, the great voice of the era, called for an art with "an eye to practical life . . . not restricted by conditions ineligible to the masses." In Eakins' work he was not disappointed, and the painter returned the compliment by declaring that the poet "never made a mistake" in his utterances. As the artist's first biographer, Lloyd Goodrich, perceptively noted, Eakins occupied a peculiar position at the time he completed *Swimming*. Although his work was not popular and critical reception was on the whole unfavorable, he was recognized as an innovative teacher in one of the nation's leading art schools, as well as a noted expert on the scientific anatomy of the human body. In *Swimming*, there is a quiet passion for life that strikes a familiar chord in everyone. Like Whitman, Eakins told the truth about his feelings by objectifying them in art.

But there is more to *Swimming* than its unchallenged status as a masterpiece of American art. It is also an unqualified civic treasure, a vivid symbol of the cultural accomplishments of the Fort Worth community, past and present. When the painting was acquired from the artist's widow, Susan Macdowell Eakins, in 1925, the city of Fort Worth had entered a period of rapid growth, from its simple beginnings as a regional cattle center to a bustling marketplace for the burgeoning West Texas oil industry. Along with municipal growth, there were cultural developments as well; the fledgling Fort Worth Art Association was actively supported by the Friends of Art, a civic-minded group of individuals and businesses who hoped to give their fellow citizens "an appreciation of art." Although these people recognized "the extreme difficulty of procuring any considerable sum of money for pictures in this new country," where people were engaged "in the work of carving a city out of the raw prairie," they were determined to succeed. In this way the Friends of Art managed to acquire Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole*—now known more accurately as *Swimming*—for the princely sum of seven hundred dollars. It was a testament to Mrs. Eakins herself that she agreed to their modest proposal, clearly endorsing the pioneer spirit that lay behind it. And, according to Clarence Cranmer, Mrs. Eakins' agent at the time, the sale of this painting seemed to be a catalyst for further acquisitions of Eakins' work by other major museums and collectors.

For many years, *Swimming* was exhibited at the Fort Worth public library, where it was seen and remembered by generations of viewers. When the museum eventually found its own home on Lancaster Avenue, the painting still attracted considerable attention. Eventually, the museum evolved into the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, devoted to collecting and exhibiting American and European twentieth-century art, while the Amon Carter Museum, first opened to the public in 1961, rose to prominence as one of the nation's leading museums of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American art.

In January 1988, the two museums arranged to lend several works to one another, and *Swimming* came to the Amon Carter Museum. Two years later the Modern Art Museum decided to sell the picture, and the Amon Carter Museum seized the opportunity to acquire the painting for its permanent collection. However, this time the asking price of ten million dollars proved rather formidable, and the museum appealed for assistance to keep Thomas Eakins' masterwork in the community where it belonged.

Once again, as it had sixty-five years earlier, the Fort Worth community rose to the challenge. Generous contributions totaling nine million dollars came from the Amon G. Carter Foundation, the Sid W. Richardson Foundation, and the Anne Burnett and Charles Tandy Foundation. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* headed the public campaign to raise the remaining one million dollars, which included generous gifts of $100,000 each from the Capital Cities/ABC Foundation, the R.D. and Joan Dale Hubbard Foundation, and the

Meadows Foundation. Over the course of the fifteen-month campaign more than five thousand individuals, foundations, and corporations contributed to keep *Swimming* in Fort Worth for the benefit of future generations.

Soon after the painting was acquired, Doreen Bolger, then Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Amon Carter Museum and now Director of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, conceived a series of concentrated exhibitions on masterworks in the Museum's collection. The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. provided generous support for the first group of three focus exhibitions, of which this study represents the third and final part. From the beginning, Doreen Bolger has been the primary force behind this celebration of Thomas Eakins' masterwork, and the Museum owes her a debt of gratitude for continuing to oversee the project even after she had assumed more pressing duties in New England. In a similar spirit Sarah Cash, formerly Assistant Curator and now Director of the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, continued her involvement as a co-curator for the exhibition and publication, furnishing key assistance from her new post in Virginia whenever it was required.

The Museum is greatly indebted to the following scholars for their active enthusiasm and professional contributions to the project: Claire Barry, Chief Conservator of Paintings, Kimbell Art Museum; Kathleen A. Foster, Curator of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Art, Indiana University Art Museum; Elizabeth Johns, Silfen Term Professor of Art History, University of Pennsylvania; and independent scholars Richard Brettell and Marc Simpson. The rich scholarly discourse that resulted from this collaboration of individuals benefitted everyone associated with the project.

Given the number of authors involved, the production of the present volume required a good deal of planning and coordination. Special thanks are due to Marc Simpson and to Evan H. Turner, formerly Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art and an Amon Carter Museum Trustee, for agreeing to serve as general readers. In producing the book itself, Fronia Simpson took on the demanding task of close editorial review, making sure the essays agreed with one another in their many details. Thanks also go to the many staff members, past and present, of the Amon Carter Museum, who over the years have been involved in acquiring, caring for, and interpreting *Swimming* for the public.

The lenders and our colleagues at other institutions have provided invaluable information and assistance on this project. I would like to thank the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Dietrich II, Mrs. Emeline Driscoll, the Eakins Press Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (and Associate Curator Phyllis Rosenzweig in particular), the Joslyn Art Museum (and Penelope Smith, Registrar, in particular), The Library Company of Philadelphia, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Academy of Design, the National Portrait Gallery, Mr. I. David Orr, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (and especially its Archivist, Cheryl Leibold), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Princeton University Art Museum (in particular Curator Peter Bunnell), Stanford University Library's Special Collections, Wichita State University Libraries, Department of Special Collections (and Michael Kelly, Curator of Special Collections), and the Yale University Art Gallery.

For a number of years, the Museum has greatly benefitted from the extraordinary foresight and generosity of the Henry Luce Foundation, Inc., for their active support of research programs in American art. The success of this project is due in large part to their encouragement and involvement. The Museum also received crucial funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities—two beleaguered federal agencies who have generously supported the Museum's programs for many years. At a time when their mission is being called into question, we offer them our gratitude and support.

Finally, this project owes very special thanks to Ruth Carter Stevenson, President of the Museum's Board of Trustees, for her stalwart support of the Museum's efforts to acquire Thomas Eakins' masterpiece for the people of Fort Worth. Like her pioneering predecessors, Mrs. Stevenson has been a true "Friend of Art," dedicated to enriching the cultural life of the community she has known and loved all her life.

RICK STEWART
Director



PLATE 1. Thomas Eakins, *Swimming*, 1885, oil on canvas, 27⅝ x 36⅝ in., Amon Carter Museum, purchased by the Friends of Art, Fort Worth Art Association, 1925; acquired by the Amon Carter Museum, 1990, from the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth through grants and donations from the Amon G. Carter Foundation, the Sid W. Richardson Foundation, the Anne Burnett and Charles Tandy Foundation, Capital Cities/ABC Foundation, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, the R. D. and Joan Dale Hubbard Foundation, and the people of Fort Worth



PLATE 2. *Swimming [The Swimming Hole]* as it appeared prior to its 1993 restoration



PLATE 3. Detail of the original frame for *Swimming*



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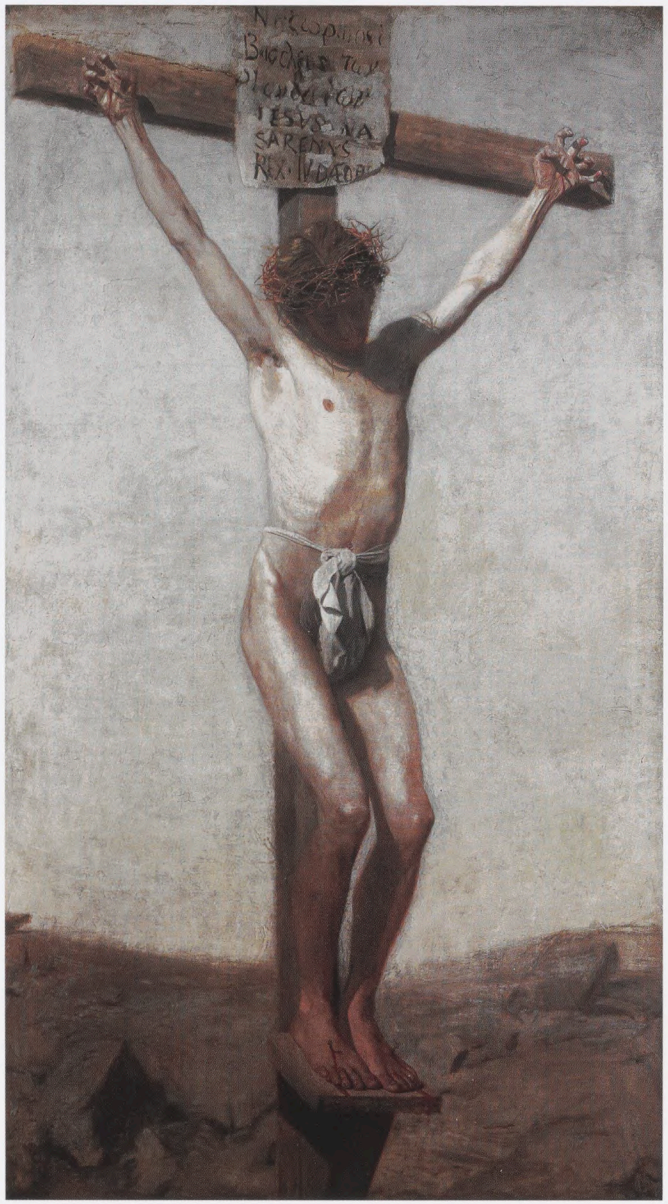


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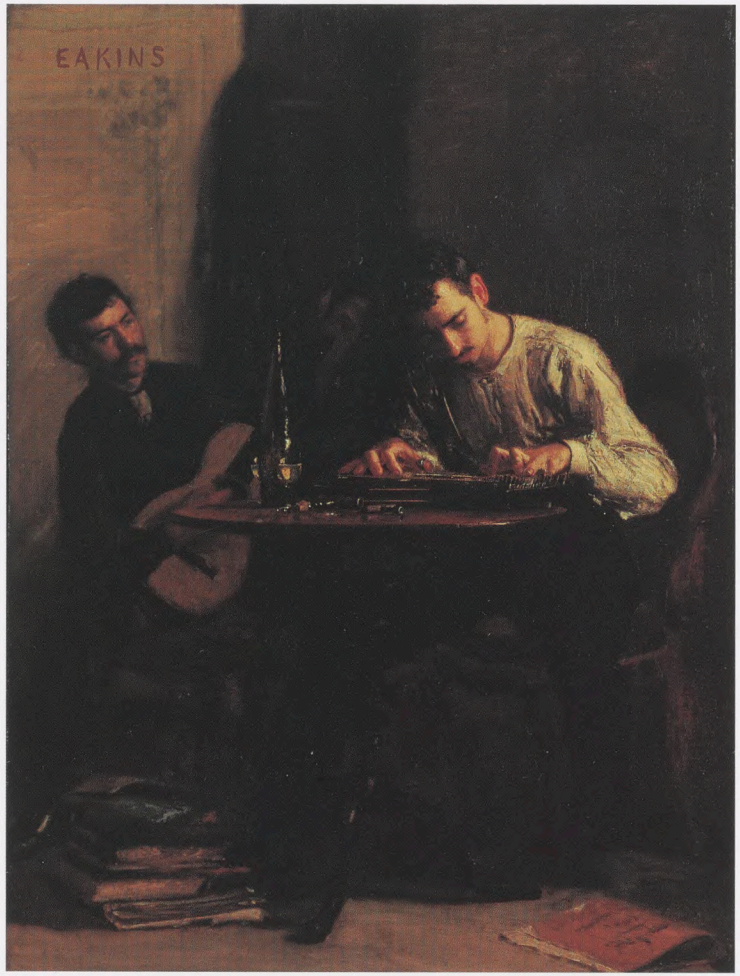


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PLATE 19. Thomas Eakins, *Landscape sketch for "Swimming,"* 1884, oil on cardboard, 4 x 5¾ in., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel W. Dietrich II



PLATE 20. Detail of *Swimming*, showing water and grassy area at lower left

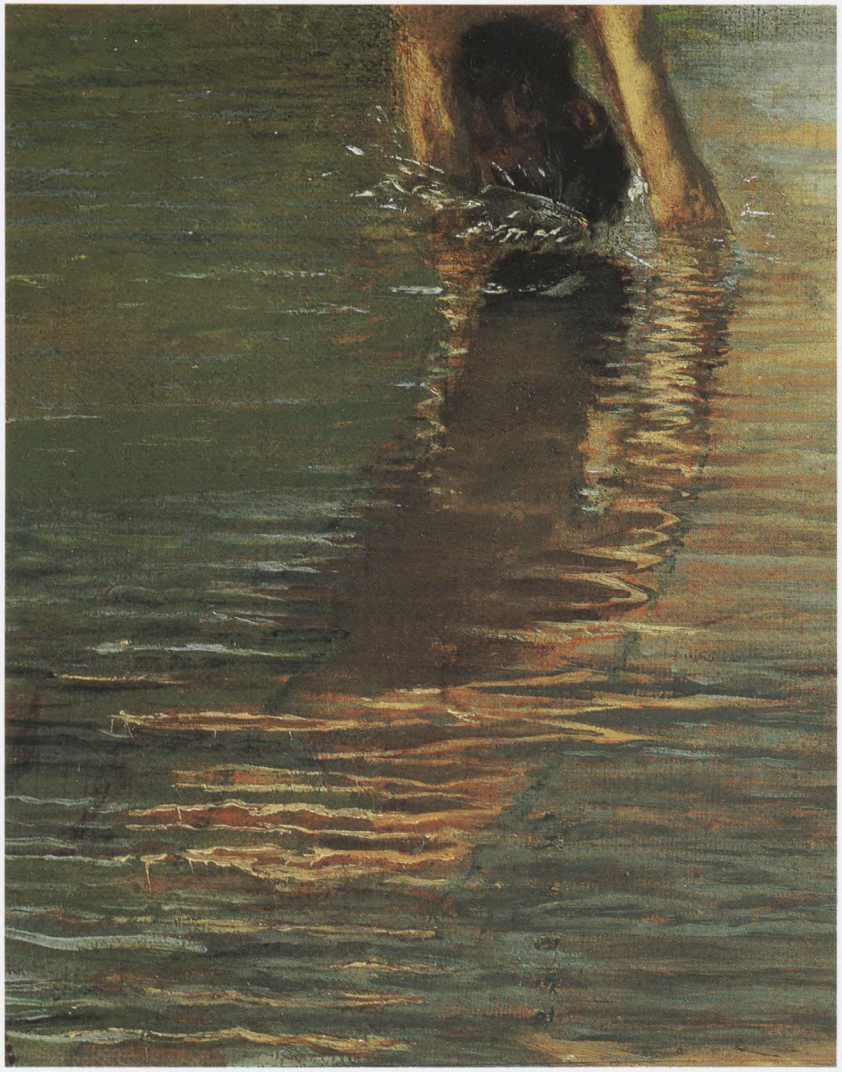


PLATE 21. Detail of *Swimming*, showing blue underdrawing around the diving figure's reflection



PLATE 22. Detail of *Swimming* showing red underdrawing in water

Marc Simpson

Swimming Through Time: An Introduction

One of the chief reasons that Thomas Eakins' *Swimming* compels admiration is its overwhelming quiet—a stillness not of lassitude or ease but of taut balance sustained on many levels. Eakins has apparently worked with great diligence to attain this internal tension, setting the elements of his work at one another like nothing so much as ideally matched athletes of equal strength and ability, locked in earnest struggle. Begin anywhere and articulate a statement about the work, and, as with Walt Whitman's easy acceptance of paradox in "Song of Myself" ("Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself"),[1] you will soon find the counter to the characterization.

For example, on the surface the scene in *Swimming* pays clear homage to the natural life, featuring six men, swimming, sunning, naked, and at ease with themselves. The only overt signs of domestication in the benign landscape they inhabit is the stone platform—too orderly to be natural but having no obvious present use to justify the effort of its construction—and the dog. No bathing houses or other reminders of a resort establishment, no pile of discarded shoes or stiff collars intrudes to suggest another existence, of labor or a wider society, to which they must ultimately return. They are released, it seems, from late-nineteenth-century urban protocols. Yet this freedom is illusory. The artist has arranged the men, singly and as a group, with studied artfulness and propriety. Many recent writers, for example, have noted that Eakins has turned or strategically angled legs to provide each bather with an effective, if immaterial, fig leaf. More important, he has set them together so that one man's limb almost touches another's, this near-concatenation building a triangle of sun-warmed flesh that echoes academic poses set within an architectural frame. In this way Eakins establishes a rock-solid geometry for the scene, constricting the figures to their current poses and relative placement. Form (of considerable rigidity) and content (of abandon) wrestle; neither prevails.

Parallel to Eakins' play with a sense of boundaries and limits is his manipulation of the painting's temporal dimension. He is careful to imply, through the men's poses and gestures, through their seeming attention and watching, narrative events unfolding through time. On one level we are meant to believe that the figure diving from the stone platform, already in the water up to his elbows, will soon splash wholly under the surface. (The mere choice of depicting a dive into water, nearly unprecedented in the history of Western art, demonstrates the painter's intense ambition; not even Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina*, the ne plus ultra of male bathing pictures, included such a figure.[2]) And because the vitality of the poses moves along the stone structure from left to right, from reclining to sitting to standing to diving, it is conceivable that the standing figure, posed as if modeling for a Renaissance bronze, will next move to the edge and then into the water, with the seated and reclining men each following in turn. Likewise, the swimmer arriving from the right, an oblique self-portrait of the artist, engenders an empathetic response in us. We are physically closest to him, and, as he does, we watch the others. Since we know that he cannot tread water indefinitely, we want to imagine his moving forward and finally clambering up the rocks to join the others, taking the same route, perhaps, that the red-

haired youth is even now traversing. We want to imagine that the dog, too, upon whom most of the men within the picture momentarily focus their attention, will soon come to shore and shake off.

And yet Eakins stymies this simple resolution, instead denying momentum and suspending time's flow. He does this in part through the very geometry that suggests it: the rigor of the semipyramidal arrangement on the rock is so perfect that it implies immutability. This is especially the case when that triangle is set within the larger context of the triangle on the surface of the picture plane, suggested by the placement of all the men, and complemented by the triangle moving deep into the fictional space formed by the three figures in the water. The parallel lines of the foliage in the background to the right reinforce the angle of the diver's figure, further encouraging us to read him as levitating in place.[3]

Even more effective in establishing stasis, however, are Eakins' gentle counterventions of nature's laws, his sacrifice of observation in favor of an alchemical *enveloppe* of palpable light and weighted air that transmutes reality into dream.[4] Consider the light that floods the scene. In places it falls hot and direct, glowing off the figures; simultaneously, however, it seems cool and diffuse, so as not to glare and conceal the men's carefully defined musculatures. The mixture of sharp and softened shadow lines, the means by which Eakins sculpts the bathers' bodies, further confounds the notion of a unified natural light source. Nor does the imprecisely rendered gray sky, nor even the landscape itself—bosky and moist to the left, sunstruck to the right—testify to a commonly observed and faithfully transcribed natural phenomenon.[5]

There is a simple explanation for this. Eakins was making a late-nineteenth-century realistic painting, a composite entity comprising willed choices and willful fictions. Especially given what we know of Eakins' training and teaching, both rooted in a rigorous academic study of the human machine, it seems wholly in keeping that he would document the individual parts of his composition on site. (Photographs and oil studies of the landscape and of groupings of bathers—none, however, showing quite the same configuration as the final composition—record this process.) And it is equally consistent with his time and background that he would take these impressions back to his studio and there weave them, augmented by ongoing study of the individual figures, into the finished work. What is surprising is that a painter as dedicated to fact and as skilled with his technical apparatus as Eakins unquestionably was, should consciously choose to incorporate these various bits from different environments with so little attempt to reconcile the whole to the fiction of a unified site and environment. While a student in Paris, Eakins had written of his admiration for "big pictures" in which "you can see what o'clock it is afternoon or morning if its hot or cold winter or summer & what kind of people are there & what they are doing & why they are doing it."[6] *Swimming* shows that by 1884 Eakins' ambitions had changed, away from simple transcription to a more inflected creativity.

The question of Eakins' manipulation of focus also comes to bear here. When we are in front of the picture, it is almost impossible to look elsewhere than at the figures or their carefully calculated and rendered reflections. Eakins has made it so through various degrees of finish in the different parts of *Swimming*. If we imagine a truncated diamond shape with its apex at the head of the standing figure and its bottom cut by the lower edge of the picture, we will note that everything within this diamond—figures, stone platform, watery reflections—is laboriously detailed, truly seeking to bring the illusion of three dimensionality to the painted forms. But surrounding this diamond on three sides, excluding only the lower right corner of the canvas, where the older man is swimming, is a haze of near mystical impenetrability, Ryderesque in the dependence of context for decipherment.[7]

Now, a changing degree of focus is a basic element of daily sight. But Eakins switches between extreme precision (in the figures and the central

foreground) and excessive diffusion (everywhere else) with virtually no moderating zones between. The situation in the real world that comes closest to replicating this effect is when one is studying a small object, perhaps something held in the hand, that does not occupy the full field of vision. An extreme concentration on the held object can induce an almost trancelike state, separating it from the rest of the world and casting the larger scene into virtual illegibility.[8] Eakins, by imposing this selective focus on all the viewers of *Swimming*, forces us to respond to the bathers as if they were miniatures we had cupped in our hands and were studying intently, rather than as figures inhabiting a fairly broad view seen from a distance. He thus inverts our habitual and expected manner of seeing, confounding near and far, close focus and a more general scenic point of view.

The painting's stillness works on yet a simpler level, an aural one. It is nearly impossible to imagine the sound of romping or of revelry echoing across this water, and yet that—cries, plashes, barking, the sharp involuntary yelps prompted by hot bodies hitting cold water—is precisely what we would expect of such a scene, and what we know Eakins experienced. Eakins' boyhood friend and sometime model, the champion rower Max Schmitt, had written to the painter in 1866: "When shall we three, i.e. yourself, a sartain William [William Sartain, 1843–1924] and myself, again take a 'schwim' this season. . . . Then shall we again have belly smashers, back bumpers, side-switches etc. etc."[9] And companionable noise is an easily imagined complement to the boxing, wrestling, and swimming photographs taken as part of the campaign for preparing *Swimming*.[10] Eakins himself was fully prepared to try and suggest sound within others of his works. As the most obvious of several possible examples, in his portrait of the singer Weda Cook (*The Concert Singer*, 1892, Philadelphia Museum of Art), not only did he replicate the physiognomy of the singer's face and throat in action, but he carved a musical line, from Mendelssohn's "O Rest in the Lord" from *Elijah*, onto the frame, allowing the viewer to imagine the very tune Cook was reportedly singing as she posed. Yet with *Swimming*, Eakins elected to impose preternatural quiet upon the scene.

By choosing to induce in *Swimming* an otherworldly silence and cessation of movement, to impose on it an unreal, multiple-source and multiple-character light, and to invert in it the normal mode of viewer perception, Eakins establishes a dreamlike atmosphere, thickened and almost viscous, that removes the scene from the laws of daily life—physical, temporal, and social. *Swimming* thus becomes a world of its own, the men celebrating the freedoms of a given moment, yet each wrapped in a cloud of inaction and solitude.[11] It is, because of these many contrasts and complications, an idyll locked in amber, a paradise tinged with inexplicable regret.

Like every great painting, while *Swimming* necessarily opens a window onto the soul of its creator, it simultaneously holds up a mirror to each person who takes the time to study and appreciate it. It is a work that, as Adam Gopnik has observed in a wholly different context, "is like a poem, and, like any poem, it presents a universe of possible readings to the contemplative mind while remaining fixed, structured, inalterable."[12] The very stillness of *Swimming*, arising from balanced pairs of contradictions, allows the painting to accrue an ever-greater degree of indecipherability. Considering critical responses to the work is thus revelatory of a variety of past moments no less than of our own time.

The extent of comment prompted by *Swimming* has grown exponentially over the past century. When the work was first shown to the public, at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the fall of 1885, Eakins was at the height of his professional teaching career and an active force in the art world of Philadelphia. The appearance of this complex figural work, however, elicited barely a murmur of polite acknowledgment from professional critics. And although a prominent local collector had commissioned *Swimming*, lent it to the exhibition, and was on record in the exhibition catalogue as being the owner/lender, while it was still on public display the patron

asked Eakins to take it back and to exchange it for another painting. The work, that is to say, suffered a profoundly inauspicious debut.

The next year, 1886, *Swimming* was shown at the Southern Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky, and in the next Eakins sent it farther west, to Chicago's Inter-State Industrial Exposition; in both exhibitions it apparently garnered a resounding critical silence. During the following three decades, so far as we know, no one beyond the painter's immediate circle of family and friends saw the painting. Nor is there any extant anecdotal or pictorial data to testify to the painter's sense of the work during these years, no record to assert that it always hung in the front parlor of his Mt. Vernon Street home, for example, or was a point of pilgrimage to the painter's studio by younger artists.[13] The painting simply failed to register in any significant, public way during Eakins' lifetime.

This era of near-absolute neglect ended with the painter's death in 1916. Since then, from the time of the New York and Philadelphia memorial exhibitions of 1917, *Swimming*—or *The Swimming Hole*, to cite the name most often used in this century—has been counted among Eakins' major achievements. Its purchase in 1925 by the Fort Worth Art Association (later the Fort Worth Museum of Art and now the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth) conferred on it the status of being among the first of Eakins' works owned publicly in the West. Walter Pach bemoaned: "While sincerely congratulating the authorities of the museum on its acquisition, a person living far from their city cannot help wishing that this work, so important in the history of American art, were more accessible."[14]

Swimming has subsequently figured in most of the principal exhibitions and texts devoted to Eakins, assuming over the century an ever greater prominence in those enterprises.[15] It has, as well, often played a significant part in more general considerations of American art—taking its place as exemplary of both Eakins' and the nation's highest efforts.[16] The painting's most recent change in ownership, when the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth sold it to the Amon Carter Museum in 1990, prompted headlines and front-page stories in newspapers and periodicals across the nation.[17] So thorough has been the painting's assimilation into the national consciousness that writers on topics as diverse as Broadway plays and contemporary photography now make reference to *Swimming* as a means of explaining their subjects, treating it as a known entity whose mere mention will illuminate their argument and the parallel, presumably lesser-known, works they are exploring.[18] All of which is to say that *Swimming* has become a part of our common culture, a well-known and popular image.

As the level of awareness concerning the painting has shifted over the past hundred years, so too have the types of questions scholars and commentators have asked of the work. The initial efforts (the memorial exhibitions of 1917 and later solo shows of 1921, 1923, and 1930, as well as the writings of Alan Burroughs) sought simply to catalogue the work as among Eakins' accomplishments. Even at this stage, however, there was a sense of the painting's importance: although bearing an improvised title and no definite sense of date, *Swimming* hung on the line in a prominent position at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's memorial exhibition of 1917, flanked by Eakins' two most important male portraits, *The Gross Clinic* and *The Thinker*. Extended prose responses from these early years, however, were limited to such as one praising the veracity of Eakins' presentation, which appeared in *The Arts* of 1921:

> I think you will feel that the *dramatis personæ* of the swimming pool are real men and boys. Despite their nudity we recognize them as belonging to the early seventies. There is something about the way they wear their hair which gives the date. The man half lying on the dock is unmistakably an American. It is an invaluable statement of historical fact. So men looked and so men acted in these our United States during the lifetime of Thomas Eakins.[19]

Less than four decades after the work left the painter's easel, *Swimming* was viewed as an unfiltered document of its time, a factual presentation of a bygone era.

This presentation was considerably elaborated by Lloyd Goodrich, the artist's first and still principal biographer, in his seminal text of 1933. Goodrich was sensitive to the complexity of the made object. Thus while he, too, was careful to note that *Swimming* was "entirely realistic" (which complemented his chief identification of Eakins as a "scientific realist" whose "every figure . . . was a portrait, every scene or object a real one"), he complicated the origin of the painting by noting that it was "the most poetic of his works" and among the painter's "most complex, free, and moving compositions."[20] This rightly implies that the work was not simply a snapshot of an observed scene laboriously transferred to canvas but an imagined composition developed by the artist and given form through a series of choices and strategies. Goodrich's later writings, articles, and exhibition catalogues, culminating in a two-volume text published in 1982, continued to place *Swimming* at the crux of reality and idealism: "a group of real young men bathing in a real place—a subject as idyllic as *Arcadia*, but straight out of reality."[21]

The subjectivity and artfulness that Goodrich allowed was emphasized in 1941 by the literary historian F. O. Matthiessen, who drew a comparison, "in so far as the effects of one art can approach those of another," between the works of Eakins and Walt Whitman.[22] Matthiessen was particularly struck by *Swimming*'s powerful, Renaissance-like geometry and sense of construction achieved through ever-accumulating observations of the human physique. He found this technique paralleled in Whitman's method of evoking life through direct recitation of facts and experimental use of the vernacular, citing such passages as "Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore" or "the funeral of an old Broadway stage-driver" from "Song of Myself." Matthiessen's concerns are almost purely formal, although the similarity in subject matter between "Twenty-eight young men" and *Swimming*, which he only incidentally pointed out, has since been frequently noted by various commentators.

Eakins' well-documented fascination with the human body, his belief, as he wrote while a student in Paris, that "a woman naked . . . is the most beautiful thing there is [in] the world except a naked man,"[23] and the centrality of the figure in his rigorous academic regimen as both student and teacher, prompted several commentators during the 1940s to wonder at the scarcity of nudes in his production. The beauty of *Swimming*, their assumption of its complete success as a painting, moved them to expressions of elaborate regret that the painter was not able to produce further examples of his contemporaries seen in the altogether in the out-of-doors.[24] At the end of the decade, Oliver Larkin included a long passage on the work in his *Art and Life in America*, weaving a splendid word-picture and formal appreciation from the words of Walt Whitman and images of the Italian Renaissance:

> Six men, Eakins among them, had gone "to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked"; one of them dives from the rock, another stands upon it with the splendid corporeality of a Signorelli figure. Out of the reclining, the leaning, the swinging of the six bodies, Eakins created a rhythm in space as well as a frontal pattern upward to the crowning figure and swiftly down to the diver. Within the depth given by his water, his mass of projecting rock, and the wooded bank beyond he gave his bodies an air-surrounded solidity that had seldom been seen in America.[25]

Swimming was still wholly praiseworthy, a veristic depiction of a real event manipulated by the artist's will and sensibility.

By contrast, critics in the 1950s and 1960s tended to perceive a tension in the work between the relaxed and highly informal subject and Eakins' closely studied and controlled rendering of it. For some this was a source of strength that lent *Swimming* a "certain small monumental quality, the sense of permanence attaching to the casual event." The writer Sylvan Schendler, in his revelatory and beautifully written biography of the artist of 1967, allowed the fragmentation but carried on: "yet one may object to the reminders of the studio in those poses only by refusing to see in them a

psychological expressiveness achievable by no other artist at that time, or by failing to respond to the certainty with which the total work evokes its mood, its lyricism, its sense of pagan ease."[26] Others, however, saw the work as falling "slightly short of complete success," finding fault in the obvious studio origin of the figures and seeing the whole composition as "somewhat academic and contrived" or as "overlaborage."[27] Barbara Novak articulated the point most forcefully in 1969, claiming that *Swimming* assumed "a curious artificiality" because of its "extreme scienticism," making it "more of a laboratory for research on the various poses of the human form than a unified work of art."[28]

Since the 1970s, most (but by no means all) writers have conceded the quality of *Swimming* and claimed for it a high place within any consideration of Eakins' career.[29] They have then proceeded to use the work to explore at least one of three different themes: the Americanness of the painting and its subject, the role of photography in its development, or its apparent invitation to speculate on the sexuality of the artist. Several have determined to read the work as embodying democratic openness and freedom from conventions. Arthur C. Danto asserts simply that "the absence of clothing is a metaphor for the proposition that all men are created equal." For him, the swimmers' "innocent outdoor pleasure in a kind of natural paradise" is a robust affirmation of America.[30] Linda Nochlin sounds the democratic theme even more stridently. Praising the work's "heady sense of escape from social constraint," she concludes: "[I]n the Eakins painting, democratic freedom is signified by the youthful male American body in the American landscape: to be American is at once to be natural and to have a privileged relation to Nature."[31]

As the subject of photography has gained prestige in museum, marketplace, and academic circles, increased attention has been turned to Eakins' photographic efforts. Gordon Hendricks, Ronald J. Oronato, and Ellwood C. Parry III, in particular, pioneered in cataloguing, classifying, and exploring the fashions in which the photographic works interacted with the paintings, so that nearly every mention of the painting in scholarly literature from 1974 onward has at least acknowledged the existence of the closely related photographs, often balanced by a mention of older art sources. Milton W. Brown, for example, wrote of *Swimming* as "Poussinesque in its classical structure and serenity, but the contemporary note of visual objectivity is obviously dependent on the camera."[32] And John Wilmerding observed that the painting's "sense of portraiture and frozen poses derives from preparatory photographic studies made on the spot," before proceeding to note that the composition in general "alludes to the casts Eakins knew of the ancient sculpture, friezes, and pedimental fragments."[33] The recent publication of the manuscripts and photographs belonging to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts' Bregler Collection, in *Writing About Eakins* and *Eakins and the Photograph*, have greatly expanded the public knowledge of these elements of Eakins' career. In an essay in the latter text, Elizabeth Johns has written of the campaign resulting in *Swimming* as a kind of "photographic fantasy" that would suggest "Eakins's devotion to the scientific exploration of reality, his interest in mathematics, his leadership of the group . . . , and the students' devotion to good health and fellowship."[34] Danto characterizes the connection between photography, especially the painter's explorations of motion photography, and *Swimming* as especially haunting: "Eakins's use of techniques influenced by photography as a means to further artistic fidelity, ironically contributed to the progress of a technology that would undermine the idea of verisimilitude in painting."[35]

Contemporaneous with documenting the work's ever-richer ties to photography has come a more overt appreciation of the sexual nature of *Swimming*—what Anne Hollander has called its "thick emotional texture"[36]—and increasing speculation concerning the artist's sexuality. Gordon Hendricks raised the issue in 1974. Although Hendricks wrote only three paragraphs about the work and its campaign in his biographical and critical

study of the artist, he did attempt to identify the sitters, reported on a date that had been revealed in a conservation treatment of 1961 (interpreted at the time as 1883), and spoke of the cache of photographs showing Eakins' male students in the woods wrestling, boxing, and swimming. He noted: "Some have considered such photographs as evidence that Eakins, if not homosexual or bisexual, was at least homoerotic." Hendricks immediately denied the possibility: "But the artist would undoubtedly have done the same thing with his women students if such a thing had been possible."[37]

William H. Gerdts, however, in a general survey of the nude in American art that also appeared in 1974—the book's subject is a telling symptom of the discipline's greater interest in matters of sex and sexuality—wrote of the work more determinedly. After discussing both photography and antique prototypes as relevant for certain of the figures, Gerdts noted that earlier mentions in art-historical literature of the naturalness of the scene and Eakins' athleticism all overlooked a central element of the work: its deliberately and intensely sexual nature. He continued:

> The love of youth expressed, the nobility and detailed muscularity of the figures, the caressing light, all suggest the sexual attraction on the part of that older man introduced into the composition as observer, or voyeur, at right angles to the general axial direction of the triangle of nude figures. Such sexuality is lacking in Eakins's few treatments of the female figure. Whether conscious or not, homosexuality may have contributed to a sympathy with Walt Whitman, whose great portrait Eakins painted and whose poem "Twenty-Eight Young Men Bathe by the Shore" bears literary analogy to Eakins's *Swimming Hole*.[38]

Henry B. Rule, in an article also published in 1974, elaborated on the parallels between the work of the poet and the painter. Rule noted the fact that for both Whitman and Eakins, nude swimming was "one of the joys of life" and pointed to the common theme of *Swimming* and "Song of Myself." But he went further, saying that in mood and content, *Swimming* most resembled the "Calamus" poems, being the perfect symbol of "the font where men are baptized in the religion of loving comradeship." He closed his discussion of *Swimming* with the intensely physical assessment:

> Eakins's pictorial representations of the beauty and innocence of the body can be seen as brilliant and poignant achievements. They seem to plead with us in much the same tone as Whitman's lines:
>
> > Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass,
> > Be not afraid of my body.[39]

Since then, several writers have simply assumed the work to be evidence of Eakins' deep-seated (although apparently suppressed) homosexual urges. It has thus appeared in such anthologies as Emmanuel Cooper's *Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* or Allen Ellenzweig's *Homoerotic Photograph: Male Images from Durieu/Delacroix to Mapplethorpe*; commentary in the former, praising the innocence of the whole, nonetheless characterized the standing figure "at the tip of the pyramid" as a "physical and symbolic demonstration of Eakins' own homoerotic interests."[40] Michael Fried, who early in his challenging *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration* simply mentioned the painting as containing a self-portrait, later in his argument, in a section based on a Freudian reading of Eakins' great *Gross Clinic* (see fig. 32), speculates that one element of that work is a "'paranoic' scenario based on the homosexual wish-fantasy of being sexually possessed by a man." He adds as a note: "Another major painting by Eakins in which homoerotic fantasy would appear to be in play is of course *The Swimming Hole*."[41] The "of course" demonstrates how easily the suggestion of homoerotic intent has been accepted by many recent scholars. Edward Lucie-Smith, calling *Swimming* "most elaborate and most intently felt," casts a peculiarly contemporary glaze over the work by asserting: "Eakins's paintings of nude and semi-nude males are the nearest he ever came to that suspect quality, glamour."[42] Adam Gopnik, in his extended consideration of the artist's career, approaches *Swimming* directly through

the subject of homosexuality, declaring that in it, "desire for the male body seems to become the picture's essential subject." Gopnik, in fact, senses the same stillness that we began this essay with, but locates the source for the quiet somewhat differently. He asserts that *Swimming* and the nearly contemporaneous *Arcadia* "possess (and are possessed by) a vein of homoerotic poetry, and not just because they contain naked men and boys. The poetry is created, first of all, by their stillness—a stillness that was achieved in part by Eakins' endless preparatory photographic studies, and a stillness that also, as so often in painting, seems closely allied to longing."[43]

In addition to inclusion in biographical or thematic texts, *Swimming* has also recently been the subject of two extended studies relating to a more complex reading of the work's possible meanings/revelations, both focusing on the notion of the display and admiration of male physique. In an allusive and intricately argued essay, Whitney Davis seeks to explore, through the lens of psychoanalytic analysis and a range of recent scholarly approaches, the question of how *Swimming* and the studies and photographs closely related to it suggest a layering of homo- and heterosexual desire and nondesire.[44] In particular, Davis posits a narrative underlying the entire series, with its psychological climax in the finished painting, where Eakins reveals and gratifies his hypothetical longing through a series of compositional "fissures," most crucially the purported distortion of the carefully studied reflection of the diving figure. Michael Hatt, in "The Male Body in Another Frame," also trains the perspectives of psychoanalysis, literary criticism, and gender studies upon *Swimming*, asserting that previous readings of the painting (not including Davis' nearly contemporaneous work) did not sufficiently take into account the great flux in which issues of masculinity, sexuality, and the representation of the nude existed in late-nineteenth-century America.[45] Hatt seeks to refine the word *homoerotic*, draining it of the commonly understood notions of male desire for a male body, and instead using it as a divide between the sexual and the social. He establishes four strategies that generally validate men intently watching one another in this newly defined homoerotic way—a context of sports or warfare, a fictionalized feminine point of view, absolute aestheticization, or an exploration of differences of power or otherness (race, rank, privilege). Hatt then uses *Swimming*, and its failure to establish a favorable reputation in its own day, as a vehicle to explore the concerns of late-nineteenth-century American society, shifting focus away from the supposed emotions of its creator. *Swimming*, in addition to being a window and a mirror (to creator and interpreter, respectively), thus also becomes a key to another time.

Which brings us to the present enterprise. Having recently acquired *Swimming*, the Amon Carter has sought to explore as fully as possible the painting's past, its appropriate presentation, and its historical context. Years of archival and on-site research, a prolonged conservation assessment and significant treatment,[46] curatorial decisions concerning the manner of showing the work, and a special exhibition exploring the context and development of the painting all come to fruition here. Some results of this work are exceedingly basic: the institution has decided to return to the original title of the work, *Swimming*, used when it was in the 1885 Pennsylvania Academy Annual exhibition, rather than the later *Swimmers*, *Swimming Hole*, or *Old Swimming Hole* that had become familiar in the literature on the artist. Conservation treatment further revealed that a date that had for years been read as "1883" was in fact "1885." And as visitors to the exhibition will see, the museum has retrieved the frame for the painting that was used at least as early as 1917 and, having restored its elaborate gilded surfaces, returned it to the painting, taking away the simple oak frame that had most recently surrounded the work. So title, date, and manner of presentation are all freshly thought out and put forward. Likewise, the conception of the exhibition, with related works, photographs, and paraphernalia, marks the first time this group of objects has been allowed to testify together on Eakins' work. The resulting story promises to be enlightening.

The present book accompanying the exhibition, too, aspires to establish a new context for *Swimming*. Five art historians and one paintings conservator each contribute essays that break new ground in our understanding of the work. Kathleen A. Foster, integrating her study of the work with an unparalleled understanding of Eakins' whole career (derived from her in-depth involvement with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts' Charles Bregler Collection), begins the series with an extended examination of the painting, its development and reception, and its place in Eakins' career. Doreen Bolger next looks closely at the commission of the work, from Edward Hornor Coates, the chairman of the Committee on Instruction at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and thus Eakins' principal overseer. By exploring the aesthetics of Coates and his wife, the poet Florence E. N. Coates, Bolger is able to establish the common interests that animated a significant portion of Philadelphia's cultural elite, leading to the commission, and to consider the problems that contributed to the Coateses' eventual rejection of *Swimming*. Sarah Cash then turns a vast amount of new research to good account, providing for the first time a convincing account of both the site and the people depicted in *Swimming*.[47] The dynamics and individual histories of the men portrayed allows *Swimming* to be seen as an intensely personal and relevant document for Eakins, rather than a more generalized vision of Arcadian principles.

The text then turns in a more reflective direction, with an essay by Elizabeth Johns that explores Eakins' ambitions as mentor and leader of a dedicated academic community. *Swimming*, in this line of reasoning, provides a visual manifesto of the principles to inspire serious art-making and fully felt living. Johns also explores the parallels between Eakins' beliefs and those of Walt Whitman—a lodestar just across the Delaware River in Camden—especially the shared intensity of their belief in the spirituality of the material world. Richard R. Brettell, a scholar of European painting, follows this with an expansive consideration of the male bather in European nineteenth-century art. By placing Eakins in context with Bazille and Cézanne, Brettell challenges us with the possibility of a thematic, non-nationalistic conception of history in place of the familiar stylistic developments so often chronicled.

The final essay in the book, by the paintings conservator Claire M. Barry, records the physical state of *Swimming*, adduces the transformations that it has undergone, and reports on what the painting reveals of Eakins' working technique. The text closes with brief biographies of the men depicted in the painting, by Cash, and a richly detailed exhibition history and bibliography of *Swimming*, compiled by librarian Milan Hughston and Cash.

Taken together, the exhibition and book *Thomas Eakins and the Swimming Picture* bring a rich mixture of objective fact—as much documentation as is now available—and informed speculation to bear on a justly famous work of art. Past accounts of the painting will have to be amended in its light, and future discussions will take into account the efforts made here. But I am confident that each of the authors would join with me in asserting that the final words have not yet been—and probably never will be—spoken. The taut balances and enigmatic oppositions that Eakins so skillfully developed, consciously or no, in *Swimming* promise that the work's fascination will continue to prompt diverse readings and discordant assessments, allowing the painting to play many roles in different personal, cultural, and art-historical narratives.

NOTES

1. Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* (New York: Library of America, 1982), p. 246.

2. An illustrated letter of May 1, 1866, to the painter from his friend the sculler Max Schmitt does include several sketches of men diving, along with the caution, "Don't show these drawings to anybody, lest I should attain to an unenviable notoriety for my original notions of anatomy" (reproduced in Phyllis D. Rosenzweig, *The Thomas Eakins Collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden* [Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977], cat. no. 9). Twentieth-century paintings are more acclimated to such stop-action scenes: see, for one example, Eugène Jannson's *Navy Bath House* (1907), illustrated in Patricia G. Berman, "Body and Body Politic in Edvard Munch's *Bathing Men*," *The Body Imaged*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 75.

3. The rigor of the composition, as well as the subject of posing men in a homosocial setting and the monumentality contained within a relatively small frame, brings to mind Thomas Anshutz's *Ironworkers' Noontime* (1880, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco). Eakins surely knew of Anshutz's work through its exhibition twice in Philadelphia in 1881. In 1883 *Ironworkers' Noontime* entered the collection of the foremost collector of American art of the day, Thomas B. Clarke. Could Eakins' work be a pastoral response to the industrial-themed achievement of his junior colleague?

4. Eakins' ability in this direction is what prompted, I believe, Hilton Kramer to center an essay devoted to the painter on a phrase from Henry James, who wrote of Fromentin's "'extraordinary envelope of dense light and shade' we call chiaroscuro" (Hilton Kramer, "Can Eakins Be Exported?", *Modern Painters* 6, no. 4 [Winter 1993]: 18–22).

5. Eakins' friend and colleague Leslie Miller wrote while *Swimming* was on view at the academy: "Mr. Eakins has done some very strange things. . . . In nothing that he has done however has his work been so persistently and inexcusably bad as in the landscapes which he has introduced as backgrounds for his figures. That in the 'Swimming' . . . will serve as a fair illustration" ("The Awards of Prizes at the Academy," *The American* [Philadelphia], November 7, 1885).

6. Eakins to his father, Benjamin Eakins, March 6, 1868; quoted in Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989), p. 207.

7. It is perhaps this contrast of manner that prompted the prescient Wolfgang Born to write in 1948: "In the landscape backgrounds of his figural paintings . . . Eakins materializes what Whistler had in mind when he regretted not having studied under Ingres, for in Eakins there is something of Courbet's tonal finesse modified by a linear exactitude that gives it a fascinating austerity" (*American Landscape Painting* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1948], p. 156).

8. For the magic of the miniaturizing process, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (1958; rept., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 23.

9. Rosenzweig, *Eakins Collection of the Hirshhorn*, cat. no. 9. And this rambunctiousness was common. Walt Whitman observed such and reported it in *Specimen Days*, in a diary entry of August 10, 1881: "The laughter, voices, calls, responses—the springing and diving of the bathers. . . . [T]he frequent splash of the playful boys, sousing" (*Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, p. 909).

10. Look at George Bellows' *Forty-two Kids* (1907, The Corcoran Gallery of Art), a painting done more than twenty years after *Swimming*, to understand how fully the possibility of sound can be incorporated into the supposedly mute medium of painting. One writer used *Forty-two Kids* to form a subject-oriented pairing with *Swimming* to assert Eakins' modernity, overlooking the dramatic distinctions between the styles of the two men, the urban versus the rural settings, and the shift in meaning that takes place when the younger Bellows' preadolescents are instead the mature men depicted by Eakins (Roland McKinney, *Thomas Eakins* [New York: Crown Publishers, 1942], p. 22).

11. Adam Gopnik has located this same sensibility in Eakins' earlier sporting works. He writes of "the romance of anticipation and recollection, of looking forward and thinking back and, above all, waiting around" (Adam Gopnik, "Eakins in the Wilderness," *New Yorker*, December 26, 1994–January 2, 1995, p. 83).

12. "The Ghost of the Glass House," *New Yorker*, May 9, 1994, p. 69. While this can be largely transferred to painting, a painting is a physical thing and hence ages in a way unlike the more abstract poem. As Claire Barry's essay in the present catalogue demonstrates, *Swimming* has been physically altered over time.

13. We do know, however, that the painting stayed with the artist. After his death in 1916, it was appraised for probate at $25, the same valuation as *William Rush Carving the Schuylkill* (pl. 7). The highest value assigned to any of the works still in his estate was $400 (Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press for the National Gallery of Art, 1982], 2:273).

14. Walter Pach, *Ananias or The False Artist* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1928), pp. 249–250.

15. The complete exhibition history and bibliography of the painting are included in an appendix to this catalogue. I would emphasize especially, however, the painting's inclusion in such seminal monographic exhibitions as the Museum of Modern Art's *Sixth Loan Exhibition: Winslow Homer, Albert P. Ryder, Thomas Eakins* (1930) and the retrospectives organized at the Baltimore Museum of Art in 1937, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and, separately, M. Knoedler in 1944, the National Gallery of Art in 1961, the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1970, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1982.

Of the writers who have produced monographic treatments of Eakins, *Swimming* has been considered at length by, among others, Lloyd Goodrich (1933, 1982), Roland McKinney (1942), Fairfield Porter (1959), Sylvan Schendler (1967), Henry B. Rule (1974), Ronald J. Oronato (1976), Phyllis Rosenzweig (1977), Evan Turner (1978), Ellwood C. Parry III (1981), Darrel Sewell (1982), William Innes Homer (1992), Jennifer Hardin (1993), Michael Hatt (1993), John Wilmerding (1993), Doreen Bolger and Claire Barry (1994), Adam Gopnik (1994), Elizabeth Johns (1994), and Whitney Davis (1994).

The painting is conspicuous in its absence from one of this century's major texts on the artist: Elizabeth Johns, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

16. Highlights of the work's exhibition history in this more general context would surely include *Trois Siècles d'Art aux Etats-Unis*, shown at the Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris, in 1937; the 1939 New York World's Fair Exposition, *Life in America*, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition, held at San Francisco's M. H. de Young Memorial Museum; *American Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, organized by the American Federation of Arts to circulate through Germany and Italy in 1953 and 1954, before being shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Carnegie Institute's *American Classics of the Nineteenth Century* of 1957; *Four Centuries of American Masterpieces*, shown at the 1964 New York World's Fair; the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *19th-Century America, Paintings and Sculpture: An Exhibition in Celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1970; *American Narrative Painting*, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1974; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts' *In This Academy* of 1976; and the Nelson-Atkins' *Kaleidoscope of American Painting* of 1977–78.

Swimming has been discussed by many of the twentieth century's major writers on American art and culture: F. O. Matthiessen (1941), Alexander Eliot (1957), James Thomas Flexner (1966), Alan Gowens (1966), Richard McLanathan (1968), Sam Hunter (1968), Barbara Novak (1969), Russell Lynes (1970), Matthew Baigell (1971), Marshall B. Davidson (1973), Donelson F. Hoopes (1974), William H. Gerdts (1974), John Wilmerding (1976), Milton W. Brown (1977), Robert Hughes (1982), H. Barbara Weinberg (1984), Michael Fried (1987), Anne Hollander (1989), and Arthur C. Danto (1995), to name but a few writers in the hope of conveying the presence of the work in the consciousness of those responsible for shaping our awareness of American accomplishment.

17. See, for example, articles from the *New York Times* of April 6, 1990; April 13, 1990; April 21, 1990; May 17, 1990; June 16, 1990; or the cover story of the internationally focused *Art & Auction* (Charles A. Riley II, "Taking the Plunge" [June 1990]: 22–28).

18. See, for example, Nancy Franklin, "The Theatre: McNally Men, Wasserstein Women," *New Yorker*, November 14, 1994, p. 129; and B. Hainley and David Rimanelli, "Shock of the Newfoundland: Bruce Weber's Canine Camera," *Artforum* 33, no. 8 (April 1995): 80.

19. Hamilton Easter Field, *The Arts* 1 (February–March 1921): 45.

20. Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1933), pp. 62, 143, 153.

21. Goodrich, *Eakins* (1982), 1:237. By 1982, Goodrich had moved away from following the 1883 date posited by Susan Eakins, and instead dated the work 1884–85.

22. F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941; rpt., London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 610.

23. Eakins to his father, Benjamin, May 1868; quoted in Goodrich, *Eakins* (1982), 1:28.

24. Lloyd Goodrich, "Thomas Eakins Today," *Magazine of Art* 37, no. 5 (May 1944): 165; Margaret Breuning, "New York Views Art of Eakins in Comprehensive Exhibition," *Art Digest* 18, no. 17 (June 1, 1944): 7.

25. Oliver W. Larkin, *Art and Life in America* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1949), p. 278.

26. Sylvan Schendler, *Eakins* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), p. 86.

27. Charles S. Kessler, "The Realism of Thomas Eakins," *Arts Magazine* 36 (January 1962): 19; Alexander Eliot, *Three Hundred Years of American Painting* (New York: Time, 1957), p. 143. Virgil Barker, writing in 1951, noted that the work "raises the anecdotal subject to his characteristic height of seriousness" and "gives pictorial permanence to the accidental." He continued, however: "The only flaw is that the slanting dive of the man involves a speed of motion to which Eakins' draftsmanship was unsuited" (Virgil Barker, *American Painting: History and Interpretation* [New York: Macmillan Company, 1951], p. 657).

28. Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 203–204.

29. Barbara Weinberg has proclaimed the work "an academic armature conjoined with the most modern scientifically recorded actualities," a work exemplifying "the essence of Eakins'

art and the key to his strength and enduring interest as a painter" (*The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme* [Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1984], p. 43). And Elizabeth Milroy lauded the painting as an eloquent demonstration of Eakins' ability to devise original interpretations of the male nude ("'Consummatum est . . . ' : A Reassessment of Thomas Eakins's *Crucifixion* of 1880," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 2 [June 1989]: 283). Evan Turner, a fierce admirer of Eakins' work, nonetheless opined *Swimming* to be "somewhat contrived" (Evan Turner, introduction to Theodor Siegl, *The Thomas Eakins Collection* [Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978], p. 26). More recently, William Innes Homer has castigated the painting as "oddly stiff and frozen," and "overly studied and tightly drawn," claiming that *Swimming* "lost the freshness that enlivens the studies" (*Thomas Eakins: His Life and Art* [New York: Abbeville Press, 1992], pp. 116–117).

30. Although Danto also notes that the work balances this naturalism with its air of belonging "in a parlor, in a gilded frame. . . . [W]hatever it depicts, it breathes the values of the academy" (Arthur C. Danto, "Men Bathing, 1883: Eakins and Seurat," *ARTNews* 94, no. 3 [March 1995]: 95).

31. Linda Nochlin, "Issues of Gender in Cassatt and Eakins," in Stephen F. Eisenman, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), pp. 258–259. Jane Addams Allen, in an article attacking censorship prompted by the recent controversies involving the National Endowment for the Arts, calls the work "as profound a tribute to the beauty of the human body as Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*." "Yet," she continues, "Eakins's paintings today seem the very essence of sober American virtues and undoubtedly he joins the pantheon of artists, admired by conservatives, who are contrasted with the corrupt artists of today" ("The Sacred and the Profane: A Continuing Story in Western Art," *New Art Examiner* 17, no. 11 [Summer 1990]: 21).

32. Milton W. Brown, *American Art to 1900* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), p. 521.

33. John Wilmerding, ed., *Thomas Eakins* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p. 26. Darrel Sewell gave a comparable introduction—equal weight to the antique and to photography—in his catalogue entry on the painting for the 1982 retrospective of the artist (*Thomas Eakins: Artist of Philadelphia* [Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1982], p. 89).

34. Elizabeth Johns, "An Avowal of Artistic Community: Nudity and Fantasy in Thomas Eakins's Photographs," in Susan Danly and Cheryl Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994), p. 86.

35. Danto, "Men Bathing, 1883," p. 96.

36. Anne Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 375.

37. Gordon Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974), p. 160. Hendricks concluded the paragraph by equivocating: "Adam Emory Albright's remark that he never knew Eakins to like anyone but 'tall, well-built people' may or may not be relevant."

38. William H. Gerdts, *The Great American Nude: A History in Art* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 122–123.

39. Henry B. Rule, "Walt Whitman and Thomas Eakins: Variations on Some Common Themes," *Texas Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1974): 29–31.

40. Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 33–34; Allen Ellenzweig, *The Homoerotic Photograph: Male Images from Durieu/Delacroix to Mapplethorpe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 27–31.

41. Michael Fried, *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 13, 172 n. 59; the essay on Eakins had earlier appeared in *Representations* 9 (Winter 1985): 33–104.

42. Edward Lucie-Smith, *American Realism* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), p. 36.

43. Gopnik, "Eakins in the Wilderness," p. 87.

44. Whitney Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301–341.

45. Michael Hatt, "The Male Body in Another Frame: Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* as a Homoerotic Image," *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts* 4 (1993): 8–21.

46. See Doreen Bolger and Claire M. Barry, "Thomas Eakins's *Swimming Hole*," *Antiques* 145 (March 1994): 408–411.

47. The sole reference to *Swimming* in Margaret McHenry, *Thomas Eakins Who Painted* (Oreland, Pa.: privately printed, 1946), was to notice that J. Laurie Wallace was one of the models. Gordon Hendricks made an attempt to identify five of the six men, erroneously including A. B. Frost in the roster (*The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins*, p. 160). Goodrich (*Eakins* [1982], 1:332) provides a good summary of the unsettled state of the question before Cash's work.

Kathleen A. Foster

The Making and Meaning of *Swimming*

Thomas Eakins was ready in 1884 when Edward Hornor Coates, a trustee of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the new chairman of its Committee on Instruction, proposed an important commission. The following year, Coates paid him eight hundred dollars—the largest sum Eakins had yet received for a painting—for a picture that Coates "confidentially" had hoped "*might* some day become part of the Academy collection."[1] Coates meant to demonstrate his support for Eakins as the director of the academy's school; Eakins, in turn, responded with a painting that befitted the high purposes of the donor and expressed his own deepest principles as an artist and a teacher. The commission would embody the ambitions of this moment when Eakins, as the head of the country's most progressive art school, was at the height of his professional authority. His pictorial manifesto, titled *Swimming* (pl. 1), appropriately made its debut at the academy's annual exhibition in the fall of 1885. But disaster, not triumph, ensued: unfortunately, as an all-too-graphic illustration of the artist's values, *Swimming* exposed attitudes and circumstances that would abruptly bring Eakins down from his "high position" early in 1886, forcing his resignation as director and yielding "nothing but evil . . . sorrow and bitter feeling."[2] Made at the pinnacle of his powers and foretelling the story of his miserable fall, *Swimming* introduces some of the best—and the worst—moments in Eakins' life and art.

Blind to the seeds of his own disaster, Eakins must have contemplated this commission in 1884 with great confidence and excitement. He was forty years old, midway through the most active years of his career, and widely acknowledged as an influential, albeit eccentric, contemporary master. Although his best work, *The Gross Clinic* of 1875 (see fig. 32), had been criticized for its unsettling realism, Eakins was described in 1882 as "the greatest draughtsman in America."[3] By 1884, a dozen years of exhibition experience and ten years of teaching lay behind him. His earlier training had been extensive, including drawing instruction at Philadelphia's Central High School and several years of cast drawing and evening life class at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Three years in Paris in the late 1860s, studying at the École des Beaux-Arts with Jean-Léon Gérôme and Augustin Dumont, or in the private atelier of Léon Bonnat, consolidated a foundation of academic technique that supported his painting, sculpture, and teaching for a lifetime.

This European tradition was still very much alive in Eakins' imagination as he began Coates' commission. The academic realism of the École des Beaux-Arts, exemplified by Gérôme's work, and the earthy palette and broad surface of the Spanish tradition, learned from Bonnat or in the galleries of the Prado in Madrid, remained at the base of his personal style. Although determined to work from American subjects, he scanned for topics that suited European categories of the picturesque or transformed the precedents of his masters: Gérôme's oarsmen on the Nile were rediscovered in Schuylkill rowers (see fig. 31), his toreadors were recast as baseball players, his gladiators were reinvented as boxers.[4] In Eakins' imagination, swimmers and bathers—long a staple of the European tradition (as Richard Brettell describes elsewhere in this book)—could be recast as American, too.

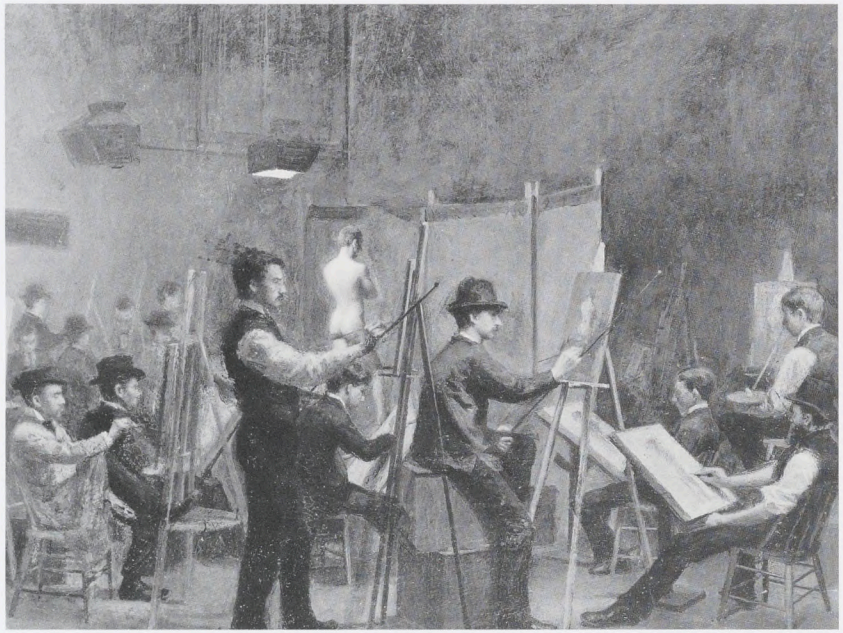


FIG. 1. Walter M. Dunk, *Men's Life Class*, c. 1879, oil grisaille on cardboard, 10¼ x 12¾ in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of the artist

All such subjects turned on the depiction of the human figure, showing respect for the canon of Western art academies since the Renaissance, when human beings were declared to be the noblest as well as the most fitting, most challenging subject for the artist. Arguing that if they could draw the human body well, they could draw anything, generations of students learned by studying exemplary antique or Renaissance figure sculptures (or plaster copies) and live, nude models (fig. 1). Until the late nineteenth century, the standard curriculum at most art schools hardly extended beyond cast drawing and the life class. The human figure stood at the center of Eakins' training in Philadelphia and Paris, and it remained ever after at the core of his work and his teaching. As the head of an art academy, he could hardly do otherwise than produce a fine figure painting for Coates, first as a model demonstration to his patron (and supervisor) and his students, and ultimately as a worthy contribution to the history of Western art, represented by the institution's permanent collection.

Such a painting would be all the better if the figures were nude. To an academic artist, clothing obscured the divine forms and bound the figures into a particular moment, whereas nudity revealed all the beauty, complexity, and timelessness of the subject. Striving for such effects, artists turned to topics from antiquity and mythology, when nudity was imagined as normal, but such confections were not for scientific naturalists like Eakins. Dedicated to the contemporary American scene, he could find few moments in modern life when nudity appeared as a plausible, naturally occurring, and picturesque event, and the prudishness of late-nineteenth-century culture put most such occasions off-limits for public, "artistic" presentation. Even Parisians were made uncomfortable by pictures of undressed women in contemporary settings offered by Manet, Degas, and Courbet—although naked "nymphs" and "goddesses" by Bouguereau and Cabanel found ready acceptance—and Eakins' audience in Philadelphia was at least as "refined." Addressing this dilemma, Eakins inventively searched the local scene and seized upon sporting subjects as novel, interesting themes offering lightly clad, muscular bodies on public display. For the first six years of his career he bent his superb skills as an academic figure painter on a remarkable series of contemporary athletes. However, opportunities to paint nude or semiclad women were not at hand in the sporting world, so it was not until 1877, amid the outpouring of nostalgic subjects inspired by the American Centennial Exposition, that Eakins bravely painted his first exhibition subject with a female nude, *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* (pl. 7). Like Gérôme, he cast the subject as historical genre. This painting, depicting an earlier Philadelphian defying polite society to study from the nude, made a statement of Eakins' principles hardly veiled

by the distancing of the subject in time.[5] His admirers read the message, praised the workmanship, and recognized the European context; one viewer announced that he had not believed there was an artist "outside of Paris" who "could do painting of the human figure like this."[6]

Notably, Eakins began this first fully nude subject just as he took his first step up the academic ladder. In 1876, when the Pennsylvania Academy opened its new Cherry Street building and recommenced life classes, Eakins volunteered to assist the ailing Professor Christian Schuessele. He also became the chief demonstrator, manipulating the props, models, and mannequins in the lectures on artistic anatomy given by Dr. W. W. Keen. Infused by energy and ambition within the halls of this promising new building, Eakins produced a painting that was about life modeling, about making art, and about being an artist in Philadelphia.

Three years later, following the death of Schuessele, Eakins succeeded to the position of professor of drawing and painting, and within a year he had produced another ambitious nude figure painting: *The Crucifixion* (pl. 5). If the Rush subject was an exquisite homage to Gérôme, this harshly naturalistic, monumental painting expressed Eakins' debt to Bonnat, who had exhibited a similar, sensationally realistic crucifixion subject at the Salon of 1874. Although Eakins had not seen Bonnat's canvas (reputedly painted from a cadaver), he must have shared his teacher's interest in the anatomical reality of the subject. Taking on the most sacred image in Christian art, Eakins wished to depict the figure as it might really appear, hanging "in the open air."[7] His critics found this approach repulsive and irreverent, but his spirit matched that of Bonnat and other realists who hoped to reform conventional academic figure painting with "scientific" discipline. Like *William Rush Carving*, but far bolder, *The Crucifixion* was an essay in the principles of modern academic figure painting.

In the spring of 1882 the academy's curriculum was revised by Eakins and the then chairman of the Committee on Instruction, Fairman Rogers, to emphasize the professional mission of the school. As the annual circular bluntly stated, "The course of study is believed to be more thorough than that of any existing school. Its basis is the nude human figure."[8] In March the committee named Eakins Director of the School and promised him a salary of twelve hundred dollars per year with a raise to twenty-five hundred when income from the newly instituted tuition fees sufficed. A senior student, Thomas Anshutz, who had been serving as demonstrator in the anatomy lectures, was promoted to the rank of assistant professor. Another advanced student, John Laurie Wallace, who had posed for *The Crucifixion*, replaced Anshutz as demonstrator. With this team behind him, Eakins threw himself into teaching. He lectured on anatomy, perspective, and composition at the academy and elsewhere, supervised a special project on equine dissection and clay modeling, and began to photograph nude models systematically, as part of a comparative survey of human anatomy intended as reference for artists. The appearance of Eadweard Muybridge, who lectured and exhibited his animal locomotion photographs twice at the academy in February 1883, rekindled Eakins' earlier interest in motion photography, and by the end of the year Eakins publicly demonstrated his own design for an "instantaneous" camera. The following two summers Eakins would work alongside Muybridge at the University of Pennsylvania, photographing his own studies of human locomotion (fig. 2). Not surprisingly, Eakins' output of painting and sculpture declined while all this was going on, and he began to send selections from his older work to the annual exhibitions. However, commissions were coming his way: a local businessman, James P. Scott, ordered two relief panels (later exhibited as *Knitting* and *Spinning*, figs. 16 and 17) for his new home in 1882, and the New York collector Thomas B. Clarke ordered *Professionals at Rehearsal* (pl. 6) the following year.

Eakins' rising sense of authority in 1882 and 1883 must have been shaken by the news of Fairman Rogers' resignation from the academy's

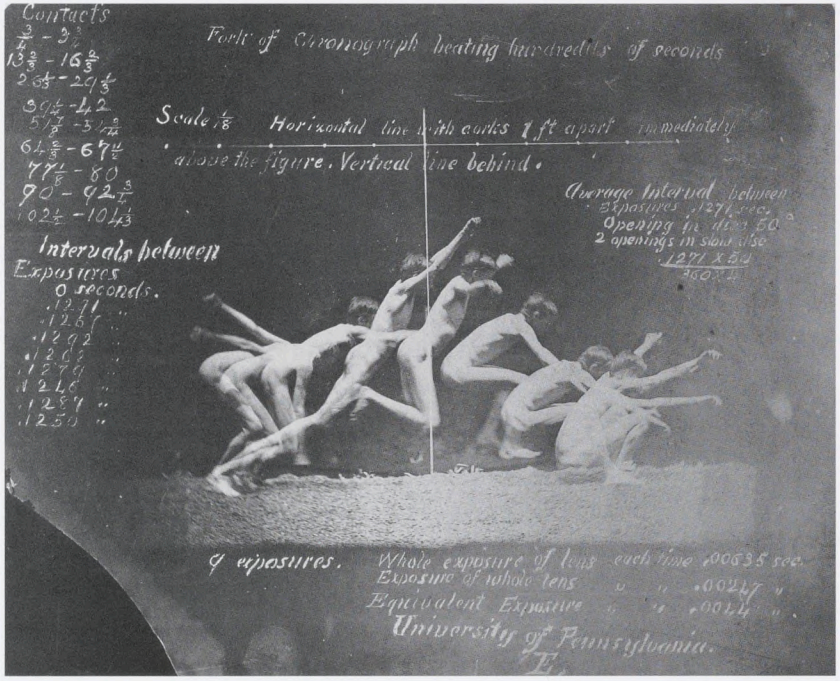


FIG. 2. Thomas Eakins, *Marey Wheel Photograph of Unidentified Model, with Eadweard Muybridge Notations*, 1884, albumen print 9⅛ x 11¼ in., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, transferred from Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Archives, 1983, HMSG 83.59

board, announced in a letter dated September 29, 1883.[9] Rogers had been a firm and understanding supporter who shared Eakins' enthusiasm for the artistic benefits of science, particularly anatomical dissection and photographic documentation. He had also been a generous patron, commissioning *A May Morning in the Park* (pl. 8) in 1879 for the highest price—five hundred dollars—that Eakins had yet received. The thirty-eight-year-old Coates, who succeeded Rogers as chairman of the Committee on Instruction, may have moved to relieve Eakins' anxieties about his new "boss" by quickly proposing an even grander commission.[10] Happily, he shared many of the artist's interests, including—as Doreen Bolger describes in her essay on Coates' patronage—an interest in motion photography. "The school has met with no reverses we feared were possible when Fairman Rogers left," Anshutz wrote to Wallace in the spring of 1884; "Mr. Coates seems to be the one we look to now."[11]

Coates' commission inspired the artist to propose his bravest demonstration of serious, modern figure painting, in keeping with his new authority as head of the school. He imagined his third nude subject, American like the first, and based on the male figure, like the second, but now contemporary, and with multiple figures. But just as history veiled the nudity in *William Rush Carving* and *The Crucifixion*, so was the daring modern nakedness of *Swimming* clad in allusions to the past, particularly the wellspring of Western academic values: classical antiquity. The antique tradition seems to have been on Eakins' mind when Coates stepped forward, for his studio was full of sketches and photographs made in the summer of 1883 for a series of paintings and bas-reliefs known as his Arcadian works.[12] Never exhibited and mostly unfinished, these images of nude or semidraped figures in the landscape pursued a private agenda that seems to have been interrupted or absorbed by the Coates commission. However, entries in Eakins' account-book show that the artist worked through 1885 on this series—particularly the large relief known as *Arcadia* (fig. 3), a smaller relief known as *Youth Playing the Pipes* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), and a lost, provocatively titled *Swimming Relief*[13]—using the same models employed for *Swimming*. Visually, the works share the mood and meaning of *Swimming*, and they unite with it to form a body of work that expresses the relationship Eakins understood between the classical past and his own vision of a modern Arcadia.

The neoclassical quality in *Swimming* begins with powerful modeling of the figures, who stand out from the background like high-relief sculptures set within the pediment of a Greek temple. The stately, friezelike arrangement, evoking antique temple and gravestone reliefs, echoes the organiza-



FIG. 3. Thomas Eakins, *Arcadia*, 1883, 11¾ x 24 x 2⅜16 in., painted plaster, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966

tion and pacing of Eakins' overtly classicizing sculpture, *Arcadia* (fig. 3).[14] Individual poses, like that of the reclining man at the far left, cite well-known antique precedents such as *The Dying Gaul*. In general, the subject of nude figures relaxing in the landscape suggests civilization in a golden age, when humans lived simply, in concord with nature. But the formal contrivance of the painting reminds us that such simplicity was disciplined, cultivated, self-aware. In this context, Eakins' presence as teacher takes on classical quotation marks, as well. As Elizabeth Johns suggests in her essay in this volume, Eakins hoped to build an academy like Plato's, devoted to the disciplined and conjoined cultivation of mind and body. Naturally, he would convene such a school outdoors, like Plato, in the "groves of academe."

The sources of Eakins' admiration for classical art ran deep in his education and were ever fresh in the Pennsylvania Academy's collection of plaster casts of Greek sculpture—including reliefs and pediment figures from the Parthenon—or Renaissance reinterpretations of this tradition. Eakins had drawn from these same plasters as a student and had studied similar sculptures in Paris, learning to hate the practice of cast drawing while coming to love Greek sculpture, especially the work of Phidias, "most noble of all."[15] He diminished the importance of cast drawing at the academy and urged students to turn, as the Greeks had done, directly to nature. The Greeks had no "antique" prototypes; they studied from life, insisted Eakins, "and nature is just as varied and just as beautiful in our day as she was in the time of Phidias."

> And our business is distinctly to do something for ourselves, not to copy Phidias. Practically, copying Phidias endlessly dulls and deadens a student's impulse and observation. He gets to fancying that all nature is run in the Greek mold; that he must arrange his model in certain classic attitudes, and paint its individuality out of it; he becomes prejudiced, and his work rigid and formal. The beginner can at the very outset get more from the living model in a given time than from study of the antique in twice the period. That at least has been my own experience; and all my observations confirm it.[16]

Eakins' message, in both verbal and visual forms, had an old-fashioned reforming impulse: as with most neoclassicism, his references conjured up the moral and intellectual culture of an idealized antiquity, presented as a model for contemporary revitalization. This earnest and didactic retrospection, added to the emphasis on the study of life "in our day," set the antique references and Arcadian mood of Eakins' work apart from the classicizing art of his contemporaries. Academic artists had always appreciated the potential for elevated figure study in classical subjects, and late-nineteenth-century painters had developed the genre in several new ways. Eakins' master, Gérôme, had earned his reputation as a painter of Greek and Roman subjects that drew upon the newest archaeological research, and, following the ever-more-scholarly course of nineteenth-century history making, subsequent painters grew increasingly detailed in their evocation of both documented events and ordinary life in the ancient world. Others visited the classical past to find a venue for fantastic and "aesthetic" contemporary inventions. Great Britain was home to a host of these painters after 1860, including Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (fig. 4), Sir Frederick Leighton, and Albert Moore, all of whom were—like Eakins—intensively academic in

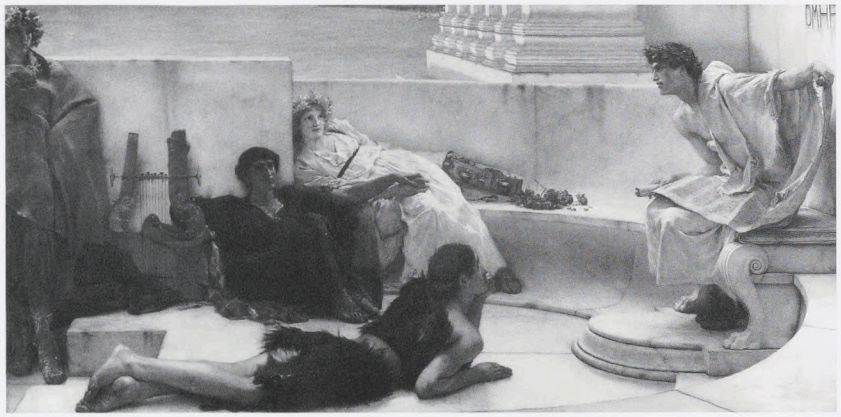


FIG. 4. Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Reading from Homer*, 1885, oil on canvas, 36 x 72⅜ in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, The George W. Elkins Collection

training and outlook. Their neoclassicism, while it indulged a dramatic, scholarly, or decorative flamboyance alien to Eakins' work, commonly favored a kind of languorous, erotic nostalgia that is echoed in Eakins' Arcadian series. Eakins' vision, like theirs, carries a critique of modern culture and a certain escapist wish, but his nudes seem alert and real by comparison to the dreamy maidens of his contemporaries; his reclining swimmer evokes *The Dying Gaul* without, as Eakins said, losing its individuality. This difference in mood returns us to Eakins' underlying message, which was not archaeological, narrative, antimodern, or erotic as much as it was bent on proving the uses of realism and the continuity of human beauty from the classical past into "our day."

The beauty of the human figure and the vitality of the classical tradition were the overt subjects of *Swimming*, but there was another professional purpose embedded in this image: it was a pedagogical demonstration of thoroughgoing academic techniques by an artist who was proud to be the director of the oldest and arguably the best academy of the fine arts in North America. As an illustration of academic principles—and the curriculum of a right-minded school—it expressed the priority of the human figure as subject, the nobility and appropriateness of nudity, and the power of disciplined observation from life. Technically and methodologically, the painting was a lesson in academic practice, using composition, color, construction, and paint handling to present Eakins' idea of professional craftsmanship.

He taught these skills in a time-honored way, as one reviewer understood in 1885 after surveying Eakins' two portraits at the academy's annual exhibition: "they are each an epitome of a painting lesson and of teaching by example."[17] Like his masters, Eakins did not demonstrate painting for his students, nor did he waste time in his classroom critiques. He "did not depend much on talking," remembered Susan Eakins; "he believed in example, and if the student or observer was intelligent he or she would understand."[18] Students were expected to learn "picture making" from art exhibitions or museums, picking up ideas about subject matter, composition, color, surface, focus, and detail. Eakins' unwillingness to teach anything at the academy apart from the basics of figure study, supported by life classes, anatomical dissection, clay modeling, and lectures on perspective or the occasional topic in art history, expressed his traditional academic outlook. Students seeking a more modern curriculum, including classes in aesthetics, composition, commercial art, or landscape, chafed under such a regime. Others, including the students who posed for him and those who knew about the Coates project, simply waited to see the picture on exhibition.

Eakins' lessons on classicism, modern realism, and academic technique, aimed at art students, colleagues, and patrons like Coates, can be easily read in the finished painting, but they become even more clear in studying the preparatory work for *Swimming*. The procedures embodied in these sketches reveal Eakins as an academic realist, and not just an earnest recorder of the American scene. Disciplined, methodical, painstaking, they are the procedures of his master, Gérôme, and the École des Beaux-Arts,

intensified by Eakins' personal quirks: his dedication to modern subjects, his love affair with the camera, his obsession with "scientific" observation from life, his compulsive craftsmanship. All of these interests, added to his training, were united in a single mission: to make the best modern realist paintings.

The making of *Swimming* began simply, with a small oil sketch. All of Eakins' major oils seem to have been planned on a small panel, usually about 10 by 14 inches or smaller in size. His student Charles Bregler stressed the foresight that preceded this sketch, as well as the tenaciousness of Eakins' initial vision. "He always made a very definite mental picture of what he intended to do," Bregler recalled. "This was then followed by a rapidly executed small sketch in oil color. The picture was then carried out as first conceived in this sketch. And he never made any basic changes from this first sketch."[19] Bregler's recollection, confirmed by examining many pairs of Eakins' compositional sketches and finished paintings, reminds us of the imagination that preceded observation in Eakins' work. As was his habit, he must have given much thought to the subject of *Swimming* before he picked up his sketching gear, rounded up his student models, and headed for the countryside.

Although preconceived, his first compositional sketch was habitually done from life. *Study for "Swimming"* (pl. 13), representing this phase of work, must have been painted before July 31, 1884, near Bryn Mawr, on the spot now determined to be Dove Lake on Mill Creek.[20] With his "mental picture" fixed, Eakins organized his group of models on site according to his plan, and then quickly painted the effect. His sketch tested the merits of his idea against reality and captured the configuration for later reference. Typically, he made this sketch in oil, not in graphite or charcoal, indicating his preference for the broad effects of color and value seized immediately with the brush. No pencil studies for *Swimming* survive, but probably few, if any, existed; by this time in the mid-eighties, drawing had become Eakins' medium for conceptual and didactic projects, whereas he used oil paint to describe the material world.[21]

The immediacy of Eakins' work on the site is suggested by the evident speed of the brushwork as well as the size of the supporting panel, which seems to have been originally cut to fit into the slotted interior of a portable painting box. Like the smaller painting box now in the collection of the Amon Carter Museum (pl. 14), which emerged in the twentieth century still containing a two-sided panel relating to *Swimming* (pls. 15, 16), this box must have been made by Eakins to carry wet sketches home, protected and separated.[22]

A comparison of Eakins' first sketch to the finished picture reveals few "basic changes," following the pattern Bregler observed: both show a pyramid of figures—reclining, standing, diving, swimming—against mirrored wedges of foliage, sky, and landscape. For many painters, such consistency from sketch to final work would be remarkable. But many details differ: in the finished painting, the standing figure turns his torso to the left; the boy emerging from the water twists to the right; the diver leaps away from us rather than parallel to the picture plane; and the two reclining figures at the left shift poses. For Eakins, who typically held tight to his first vision, the number and variety of these changes are unusual, suggesting uncharacteristic tinkering with his initial composition. Perhaps the importance of the commission made him anxious to refine the poses and their interrelation, seeking perfection: as Lloyd Goodrich noted, *Swimming* is "the most finely designed of all his outdoor compositions."[23] Or perhaps the complexity of the subject, which included more nudes than he had ever painted at once, made it harder to seize the right configuration at once. Significantly, the only similar divergence between a compositional sketch and a finished work occurs with the *Sketch for "Arcadia"* (Bregler Collection, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts) and *Arcadia* (pl. 11), which also contains several nude figures interacting.[24]



FIG. 5. Thomas Eakins, *Standing Piper (Study for "Arcadia")*, c. 1883, albumen print, 3 7/16 x 3 3/8 in. irreg., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, transferred from Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Archives, 1983, HMSG 83.22

From such an overview, Eakins dropped to the particular. In characteristically rational fashion, he attacked the different aspects of the painting in isolation, figure by figure, or in terms of landscape alone. Subsequent sketches for *Swimming*, perhaps done on the same day, focus on the landscape, as in plates 12, 16, and 19, or on a single figure, as in plates 15 and 17. The figure sketches show variants of the poses in the first panel, as Eakins began to refine and develop the pieces of his original idea. However, none of these quick sketches are very detailed, and their breadth signals their larger purpose: Susan Eakins called them "sketches on the spot, for color of flesh, the green, the water and the sky, on a sunny day."[25] Such color notes, taken home in his sketchbox, would serve as an aide-mémoire when Eakins commenced the large canvas in his studio.

The landscape sketches have an additional purpose, in bracketing exactly the view Eakins intended to include within the framing edges of his final canvas. On a larger wooden panel (pl. 12), he moved close to the wall of foliage and broadly sketched the sunlight on the overgrown stone foundation and the distant meadow.[26] Then, reaching for his smaller sketch panels, he moved back and produced, from a slightly lower point of view, a more tightly focused study of the masonry and the banks of land and foliage that step back into the distance (pl. 16). Clearly, at this early moment, he had settled on the angle of vision that gave deep recession at the right and a stage for his figures, backed by foliage, at the left. Later, Eakins would reconsider the edges of the composition and shift the whole frame to the left, as if swinging the viewfinder of a camera, so that the standing figure would hold the center. Typically, this decision came last, in response to the massing of the figures and Eakins' own sense of necessary balance and space.[27]

This sense of framing and cropping, already evident in his sporting subjects of the 1870s, must have been enhanced by Eakins' experience with his camera. After 1881, when he seems to have acquired his own equipment, Eakins made photography a part of his fieldwork, using the camera to record detail and to bracket landscape backgrounds for his paintings. By 1883, his Arcadian subjects had inspired an extensive series of photographs of outdoor nudes (fig. 5; also see figs. 22, 40–41, 47), posed for mostly by himself, his students Wallace and Anshutz, and his fiancée, Susan Macdowell. He had learned from his work with Gloucester fishermen that the camera

could capture action poses, and his own work at the University of Pennsylvania, begun in the spring of 1884, drew further attention to the utility of photography in motion study (see figs. 2, 25). At the academy, he had begun to create a photographic dossier of comparative anatomical studies now known as the Naked series (see fig. 14), while using many of the same student models in nude studio compositions that may have proved useful to *Swimming* (fig. 6). Occasions to study nude figures outside of the studio, especially in groups, must have been few, expensive, and socially risky, so Eakins again relied on the camera to make the most of his opportunities. Once home, he knew that his images could be printed, enlarged, and combined to contribute simultaneously to several different projects in painting and sculpture.[28]

The method Eakins had developed for his Gloucester and Arcadian subjects probably inspired him to set out for Bryn Mawr with camera gear not long after his concept for *Swimming* had formed. Both oil sketches and camera studies could have been done on the same afternoon, from about the same viewpoint, as seems to have happened in Gloucester, and the difficulty in mustering large groups of models more than once may have encouraged such efficiency. However, none of the oil sketches (or the final painting) describe the timbered form that appears at the end of the stone foundation in all the photographs, and no oils include the large number of figures (or even the same personnel) recorded by the camera. The setter dog, Harry, for one example, appears in two oil sketches (pls. 12, 18) but in none of the photographs. Probably, the Bryn Mawr photo session occurred on another day, shortly before or after the sketching trip.

Did the camera studies precede the oil sketches? Four images of swimmers survive from this photographic outing (figs. 7, 8, 20 and 23), which also included boxing and wrestling scenes using the same group of students (see fig. 33). The range of surviving images suggests that Eakins was exploring several possible topics involving groups of male nudes, rather than posing figures for particular compositions. Inspection of the extant swimming photographs also reveals that Eakins departed on this day from the system developed for his Arcadian series, where he studied variant poses with the camera and sometimes transferred them verbatim to the canvas (see pl. 11 and fig. 5), and where frequently the landscape setting was exactly bracketed by camera studies.[29] But none of the poses seen in the extant swimming photographs appear in the painting, nor are the viewpoints, framing, or composition of the landscape in those photographs (which are taken from three different spots) exactly repeated in the final composition of the oil. The divergence between these sets of images may hint at lost or destroyed

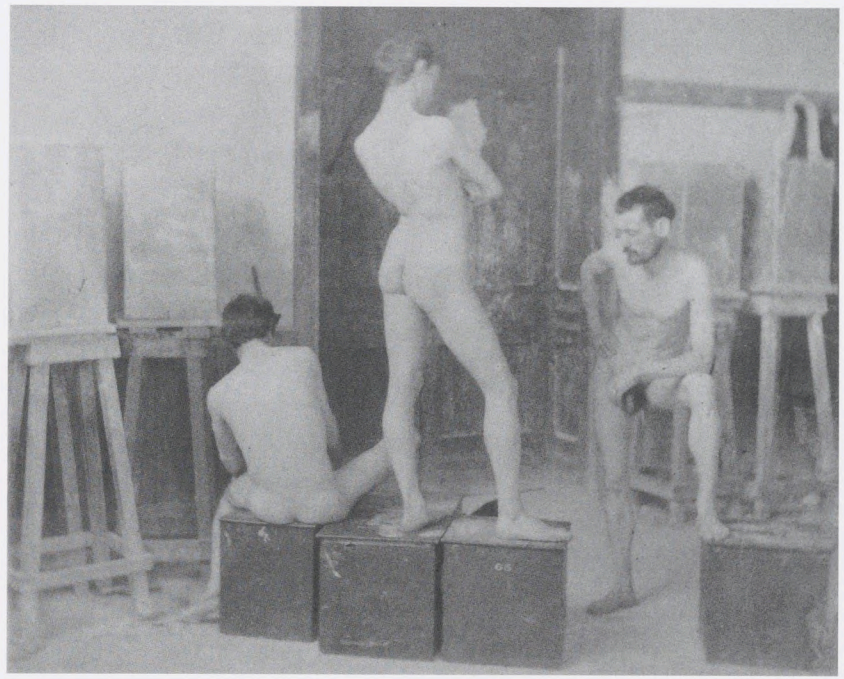


FIG. 6. Thomas Eakins, *Three Nude Models in Painting Studio*, c. 1882–85, albumen print, 3 1/16 x 4 1/2 in., The J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.254.5



FIG. 7. Circle of Eakins, *Eakins' Students at the Site for "Swimming,"* c. 1884, albumen print, 6½ x 4¾ in., The J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.811.1

pictures, or it may tell us that the photographs came first, before Eakins' mental image had crystallized, and before the execution of his first oil sketch. However, the creation of the photographs after the completion of his sketch may also have disrupted his usual method, inspiring the unusual number of changes in his first "draft." In either case, Eakins expressed the importance of this project by opening up his typical compositional process to include an unusual degree of experimentation and deliberation.[30]

The differences between the photographs and the painting also tell us about the experimental quality of these camera studies and Eakins' relative lack of control over them. He was "boss" to his students and supervisor of the situation, but because he appears in at least three of the photographs, it is obvious that he did not have complete command of the camera. The photographer (perhaps Thomas Anshutz, who was helping Eakins with motion photography at the University of Pennsylvania that summer) understood the artistic nature of the mission, and the models show a degree of self-consciousness that betrays their complicity, but the level of informality in the images also suggests Eakins' willingness to accept candid and spontaneous effects in the hopes that natural "swimming" postures would emerge from this session.[31]

Looking back and forth between the photographs and the painting, the differences also reinforce our sense of the artifices in *Swimming*. Primarily, the painting contains fewer figures, and they have a deliberateness of placement and a two-dimensional interaction as design that are quite unlike even the most contrived of these photographs. Landscape detail has been broadly suppressed to highlight the figures, and while some viewers have found the contrast unsatisfactory, clearly Eakins intended this effect.[32] He also manipulated the landscape to suit his composition, adding and deleting elements at will. While specific in certain details, *Swimming* is not a record of place in the "realistic" sense commonly expected of Eakins' work. Instead, he avoided or deleted local detail to give a more generic quality to the image and a softness that signaled "poetry" to contemporary admirers of late Barbizon landscape.

Eakins found little specific use for the surviving camera studies in his final painting, although they may have helped him shape his image. And evidently he liked the photographs on their own terms, as independent and satisfying images. His judgment might be implicit in the survival of redundant prints that express particular affection for certain negatives. Figure 23 (see p. 54), for example, exists in six extant prints; some of these are among the largest vintage prints from his studio, and two (including fig. 23) are in the complex and expensive platinum process, representing special investment of time and money. A variety of croppings also demonstrates Eakins'



FIG. 8. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins and Students, Swimming Nude*, c. 1883 or 1884, modern print from dry-plate negative, 4 x 5 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.1026

repeated consideration of this particular image. Figure 8, by contrast, survives only in the glass negative; if Eakins made any prints of it, he took no pains to save them.[33]

His decision to set these photographs aside may express his sense of the special uses, virtues, or drawbacks of photography, while indicating his resolve to paint such an important commission entirely from life. Eakins disliked painting from photographs alone, and he usually referred to them only at the outset, before using life study to refine his ideas on the final canvas. After contemplating these swimming photographs, Eakins evidently returned to his oil paints and moved on to the final canvas to block in the major masses of the landscape. Earlier, in the 1870s, his landscape paintings began with a tinted ground and a graphite grid that traced the major axes of his preparatory perspective drawing. But after 1880 his landscapes used little preparatory drawing—on either canvas or paper—sometimes because the spatial construction was less complicated or intentionally blurred, and often because photographs supplied the supporting grid and the figure scale. Using field sketches and photographs for guidance, he brought the landscape close to completion in the studio before beginning the figures.[34]

Once the landscape was well in hand, Eakins turned to the figures, transferring ideas about placement from his earlier sketches to the large canvas in reference to a few simple horizontal and vertical lines. As Claire Barry has learned from her conservation of the painting (described in her essay), two lightly scored axes intersect at the center of the canvas beneath the standing figure (see figs. 58, 59). These rulings indicate the horizon line (along the top of the stone foundation, at the artist's eye level) and the central axis of the painting, which drops through the left, weight-bearing leg of the standing bather. Subtly, the intersection of these two lines establishes our own position in front of the picture, and in respect to the scene; a grassy patch at the lower left describes the bank where we must be sitting. Barry has also detected very light squarings beneath the standing figure, indicating the transfer of this form from another study, probably in oil, perhaps photographic.[35] No studies of a developed nature survive for *Swimming* in any medium, although full-scale studies for single figures in Eakins' earlier watercolors do exist, and an occasional extant piece—such as *Wallace Posing* (fig. 9)—illustrates the power of such focused work. However, apart from the special challenges of watercolor, which for Eakins required extra preparatory studies in oil, he usually preferred to work on his final canvas at once. Generally, Eakins disliked wasting time on studies and did little intermediary work in oil between the first open-air sketches and the final canvas.

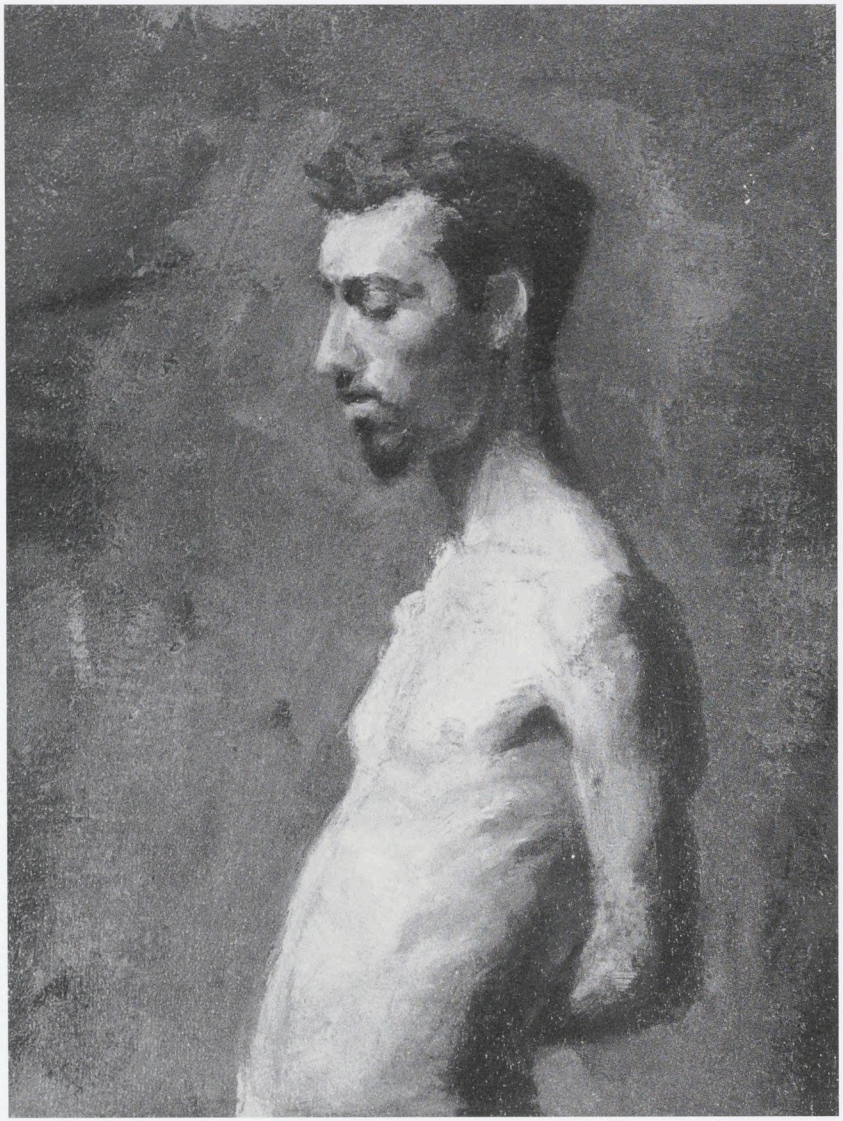


FIG. 9. Thomas Eakins, *Wallace Posing*, c. 1885, oil on canvas mounted on board, 8 x 6 in., private collection

Eakins needed additional aids, however, to paint the difficult pose of the diver. He prepared a wax maquette, much like the small figures he modeled for *William Rush*, to study the pose in midair, although this nude sculpture—like the wax figure of Rush's nude model—had been lost by 1938.[36] This figure is the most modern of Eakins' swimmers, demonstrating the courage and excitement of an artist who was making photographic studies of human locomotion just at the time this painting was being developed. Challenged by the idea of expressing motion, Eakins attempted the same feat in *A May Morning in the Park* (pl. 8), and with the same mixed result. Although the most ambitious of his figures, the diver is the least convincing, his stop-action pose uncomfortably suspended in the middle of an otherwise calm and stable group. Perhaps dissatisfied by his own effect, Eakins did not try to paint moving figures again.

The difficulties of rendering the diver may explain why payments to the model, George Reynolds, appeared so often in Eakins' account book during late 1884 and 1885. He had expended sums on photography and carfare to Bryn Mawr by midsummer of 1884, after which his biggest expenses through August 1885 were for models' fees.[37] The pattern of payment indicates many sessions during cold weather, when the models—principally Reynolds and another student, Jesse Godley, who posed for the standing figure—must have come to his studio. The intensity of these sessions radiates from the painted figures, who show the clarity and sculptural presence produced by delicate modeling, as well as the slightly surreal quality of creatures from another time and space—Eakins' midwinter studio—set against a midsummer landscape. However, as conservation of the painting has revealed, Eakins' final touches in the summer of 1885 sought to integrate figures and landscape by repainting the background around the bodies.

According to his usual practice, Eakins would have finished the foreground last, refining the water and the reflections. These reflections were already suggested in the oil sketch (pl. 13), and they were probably planned

along with the figures, as his perspective drawings of the 1870s demonstrate. Reflections were a special point of interest and pride for Eakins, whose fascination with the problems of reflected light on water made the swimming theme, like his earlier rowing subjects, additionally attractive. "There is so much beauty in the reflections," he wrote, "that it is generally worthwhile to try to get them right." The special problem of objects that slope away from the viewer was treated in the manuscript of a perspective manual that Eakins wrote, where he noted that the reflection of such objects "would be larger on the picture plane than the [object] itself." The reflection of the foreshortened diver was an illustration of this technical challenge, used to compositional advantage to make Reynolds' long but correctly mirrored figure return the visual path back to the center of the canvas. Evidently, Eakins altered the angle of the diver (who moved parallel to the picture plane in the sketch) to condense the pyramid of swimmers and make the line of Reynolds' body connect to Eakins' figure in the lower right corner. At the same time, this shift made the diver's reflection curve back tightly, eluding the end of Eakins' outstretched hand to join the circle inscribed by the arms of the red-haired boy.[38]

Swimming was finished by October 1885, when it appeared in the academy's fall exhibition, lent by Coates. On the opening day, the Philadelphia *Inquirer* reported that Eakins had sent "an important work," sure to provoke "abundant" positive and negative commentary.[39] In fact, the published response was tepid. Only one reviewer offered praise, listing Eakins' work as among "the best" in the show but describing only his two exhibited portraits.[40] A second critic made a nod to "interesting matter" in Eakins' entries, although they were "not so important as usual."[41] Such faint praise was countered by lukewarm criticism from the writer in the Philadelphia *Times*, who found *Swimming* "not agreeable." Complaining that it was "evidently intended to show the results of instantaneous photography" yet failed to suggest motion effectively, this critic judged both the color and the flesh painting "unpleasant."[42] A more incisive critique came from a colleague, Professor Leslie W. Miller, principal of Philadelphia's School of Industrial Arts, who scorched Eakins' "persistently and inexcusably bad" landscape backgrounds but neglected to comment on his figures.[43]

The vagueness or obliqueness of these critics seems remarkable in itself, especially given the predictions of "abundant" controversy and the unusually heavy press coverage of the academy's annual, which was much larger and better in 1885 than it had been in the recent past.[44] Long articles appeared in the Philadelphia newspapers debating the merits of the prizewinning artists or the Salon celebrities—such as Charles Sprague Pearce, William Trost Richards, Cecilia Beaux, Alexander Harrison—and much partiality was shown to the city's artists, including many of Eakins' students. Yet reviews that ranged the gamut from cosmopolitan "stars" to truly obscure locals failed to mention Eakins at all.[45] This silence suggests at least two unwritten shades of critical disapproval: polite sufferance (inspired by boredom or incomprehension) and tight-lipped offense. Perhaps Eakins was dismissed as irredeemably eccentric or old-fashioned, impossible to explain (or tedious to defend yet again) and impervious to suggestion. The critics were happy to praise and scold younger, more progressive artists, but maybe Eakins' entrenched naturalism, now two decades out of fashion in Paris, was shrugged off as hopelessly outdated or outré: as Miller noted in 1885, "Mr. Eakins has done some very strange things."[46] Alternatively, the *Inquirer*'s prediction that Eakins' work would "excite" controversy may make us wonder if the debate was muffled by those who, for some reason, wished to snub Eakins deliberately or skirt all discussion of his work.

In this murky context, Edward H. Coates wrote to Eakins in November, asking to exchange *Swimming* for another painting "more acceptable for the purpose which I have always had in view."[47] Coates' rejection of *Swimming*, despite his assurances to Eakins that he did not "depreciate" it, must make us speculate about the reasons he implied were too delicate to mention

"by note." Overtly, he asked for something more "representative," and indeed contemporary genre, as seen in the picture Coates chose in exchange, *The Pathetic Song* (pl. 4), was more typical of Eakins' work. However, nudity—or the "quality" of that nudity—must have been key to the problem. As Doreen Bolger explains in her essay, the "kindly relations" between artist and patron make it unlikely that the subject of the painting surprised, much less shocked, Coates.[48] Certainly the Pennsylvania Academy had frequently exhibited art with provocative nude subjects, from Adolph Wertmüller's notorious *Danae* in 1811 to Alexander Cabanel's popular *Birth of Venus* in 1877. Nude subjects exhibited in 1885, including paintings by other American students of Gérôme (such as a female bather by Frederick Bridgman and an enormous canvas of "naked urchins gambolling . . . and splashing in the waves" by Alexander Harrison) were generally praised or censured without questioning the use of nudity. The critic in the *Telegraph* who had merely nodded at the "interesting matter" in Eakins' work defended Bridgman's hackneyed harem subject as justified by "exquisite workmanship" and described Harrison's "thoroughly commonplace incident" as lifted by color and brushwork into "regions of true poetry."[49] Aesthetic interest elevated both subjects, which were also safely based in conventionally exotic precincts (a harem, a Breton beach) populated only by women or boys.

Judged by these contemporary values, *Swimming* was not stylish in treatment or tonality, but this alone would not make it objectionable; the standards of the *Telegraph*'s critic suggest that Eakins broke with convention mostly by focusing on grown men in a recognizable local setting. The novel and relentless specificity, modernity, and maleness of Eakins' nude subject must have been what discomfited Coates, for even if the figures modestly turn their backs to the artist, each one was individually characterized, and many could be recognized as academy students. The obvious narrative—joining students and their professor together in the nude—was a sensitive one for the academy's directors, who had expressly forbidden the use of student models in the school itself. Eakins was not bound to this rule outside the school, and he argued that his arrangements were a private, professional matter, but *Swimming* flaunted Eakins' sense of artistic privilege in front of tuition-paying parents who might have looked askance at such sylvan outings.

The subject also raked up worries about similar activities with women students. Eakins used some of his senior women students as models in this period and encouraged them to pose for one another privately, to save modeling fees. Many people were amazed by the idea of middle-class women painting nude subjects, but modeling in the nude—even for one another—shocked them more, since artists' models were presumed to be lower-class women of base moral character. Some feared that Eakins degraded his women students by involving them in such activities, while others were offended simply by the news that Eakins had given critiques on the work done at these private sessions and had therefore seen depictions of his women students nude. Rumors were already circulating before Christmas of 1885 concerning the "morality" of Eakins' relations with his students—particularly a story that he had stripped in front of a female student in order to illustrate an anatomical feature—and such gossip may have precipitated Coates' anxiety over *Swimming*. Accounts of Eakins' arrogance and "abuse of authority" were already familiar to the directors, but newer and more malicious accusations of "ungentlemanly" and "indelicate" behavior, ranging from mildly off-color jokes and coarse speech to incest and bestiality, may have chilled Coates' sense of the innocence and harmlessness of Eakins' painting.[50]

Coates was already sensitive, then, to Eakins' troublesome reputation when he learned from an upset student or parent that Eakins had removed the loincloth from a male model during an anatomy lecture in early January 1886. Very quickly, this gesture of principle in defiance of school policy gal-

vanized the directors and polarized the student body. The Committee on Instruction concluded that he was insubordinate, intransigent, and disdainful of the moral scruples of some students and their parents. Coates wrote to ask for Eakins' resignation on February 8; Eakins complied the following day. A large band of supportive students rallied to create an alternative school, the Art Students' League, where Eakins could continue to teach, but his enemies—including Thomas Anshutz and Jesse Godley—persisted in raking up more scandal that spring.

Late in the summer of 1886 Eakins sent his picture, now titled *The Swimmers*, to an exhibition in Louisville, Kentucky, and mustered a final defense to Coates: "I have been fearfully traduced and I think even by you sometimes misunderstood," he wrote. "I see no impropriety in looking at the most beautiful of Nature's works, the naked figure." Coates countered by insisting that the subject was closed.[51] A year later, Eakins again sent the painting far afield—to the Chicago Interstate Industrial Exposition, where it appeared under its first title, *Swimming*.[52] He never exhibited *Swimming* again, even late in his career, when retrospective selections of his work appeared at several expositions. Perhaps the painting came to represent the bitterness of rejection and misunderstanding at this moment, as well as the betrayal of students and friends like Anshutz, who inherited his position at the academy, and Godley, who spoke against him in 1886 and soon joined the decorating business of Eakins' two most committed student enemies, Frank Stephens and Colin C. Cooper. Depressed, Eakins painted very little for two years following his departure from the academy. He abandoned the Arcadian paintings and ceased seminude male sporting subjects for a dozen years. But Eakins would return to the themes of boxing and wrestling first seen in his outdoor photographs of 1884 (see fig. 33). Late in life, he essayed a reprise of *William Rush Carving*. Undaunted, he invited new scandals by again lecturing with totally nude models, this time at Drexel University. Such evidence indicates that the events of 1886 wounded Eakins but failed to alter his sense of artistic mission: "I believe," he wrote to Coates, "I have the courage of my convictions."[53]

The courage of Eakins' convictions can be read in *Swimming*, along with many other layered meanings. To Eakins, the picture came to represent defeat, but other ideas from a more sanguine time are also embedded in this image. First of all, *Swimming* is about the beauty of the nude human figure; second, it is about Eakins' wish to make pictures concerning this subject. More particular meanings emerge from the painting's two original titles, which tell us that the subject is "swimming" or "swimmers." As Doreen Bolger has remarked, Eakins' own titles emphasize the action and the figures, rather than the place, which is stressed by the modern title, *The Swimming Hole*.[54] Eakins often struck a generic rather than a particular note with his titles (*Rail Shooting*, *Spinning*, *The Veteran*, *An Actress*), inviting us to consider the larger frame represented by these particular individuals. In a literal sense, the painting depicts all the different moments of swimming, organized sequentially like the photographs in a zoetrope or the multiple exposures on his own motion-study negatives: resting, rising, standing and preparing to dive, diving, swimming, and clambering up on the rocks to rest in the sun again.[55] In this circle, Eakins placed his own self-portrait to the side, largely obscured by water, but he is twice authoritative: he is the only actual "swimmer" here, as well as the one person who sees all the others and comprehends their beauty. Only the artist—Eakins again—and the viewer know more.

At the surface, the painting depicts the wholesome and pleasant benefits of swimming on a hot summer day. The men are the picture of serenity and health, enjoying a relaxing and invigorating pastime. The classical undertones in the painting remind us that this activity was endorsed by "the ancients," who considered swimming "indispensable" to a well-rounded education; in Athens, a good-for-nothing citizen was one who could "neither read nor swim." In the nineteenth century, swimming remained the

thinking man's recreation, as it "promoted great muscular strength" while "tranquilizing the nervous system."[56] Like many athletic activities during the period of Eakins' lifetime, swimming had become an organized, competitive sport that, like rowing or rail shooting, seldom received the attention of "fine" artists. More commonly described or depicted as "bathing," with an emphasis on women washing rather than men at sport, the subject took on a modern insistence in Eakins' picture from the focus on men and the assertiveness of the active terms *swimming* or *swimmers*. Such usage was new in 1885 and therefore inherently problematic: while droves of bathing Dianas, nymphs, Venuses, and Bathshebas appear, few bathing men and no "swimmers" can be detected from titles in the academy's earlier exhibition catalogues.[57] As Richard Brettell remarks in his essay, the topic of contemporary male bathers, introduced in the awkward and controversial paintings of Bazille and Cézanne in the 1870s, would not be seen often until Cézanne's monumental bathers of the 1890s made the subject part of the modernist canon.

The novelty and bluntness of Eakins' topic has been lost to us by the intervention of subsequent images of male nudes and also by the superimposition of a later title that prejudices the interpretation of the painting. Eakins meant the athletic vitality and naked abandon of the swimmers to illustrate youth and beauty, enjoyed in nature, effectively outside of time. But the idea of such a moment, when young men could be free and older men could recover youth, inevitably tapped into a system of associations in American culture that linked the revival of Arcadian themes to a critique of modernism and also to very particular issues of national identity. In literary terms, this nexus of ideas was expressed by two contemporary writers whose perspectives offer an interpretive context for Eakins' work: Walt Whitman, whose provocative poetry continued to be suppressed in the 1880s, and James Whitcomb Riley, whose popularity through the early decades of the twentieth century has cast a lasting glow over *Swimming*.

Riley's famous poem, "The Old Swimmin'-Hole," first published in the *Indianapolis Journal* in 1882 and more widely distributed the following year as the title work of Riley's first book of poetry, quickly became a signature piece.[58] Praised for its "naturalness" and "simplicity," Riley's verse took on the dialect of an Indiana farmer remembering a paradise of boys: "Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! whare the crick so still and deep / Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep[.]" In words, Riley painted a scene where "sunshine and shadder fell over it all; / and it mottled the worter with amber and gold," creating an Eakins-ish play of reflections: "It made me love myself, as I lept to caress / My shadder smilin' up at me with sich tenderness." But Riley's descriptive focus did not linger on the setting—now "all changed, like the change in my face" by the incursion of a railroad bridge—but instead reiterated the theme of loss: "them days is past and gone, and old Time's tuck his toll / From the old man come back to the old swimmin'-hole."

Such sentiments won Riley a national reputation in the early 1880s, following his first successful lecture tour to Boston and Philadelphia in 1882, and Eakins may have known the poet's work. Eakins had a "poetic" streak and shared certain interests with Riley, including a belief in the artistic validity of American regional culture. But direct connections are not necessary to assert that the larger nostalgia inspiring Riley and his appreciative audience in the 1880s could also have contributed to Eakins' concept of his subject.[59] However, the poem had surely sanctified the idea of Eakins' subject and site by 1916, the year that both artists died, for if there were no American pictures of "swimming" before 1885, there were few "swimming holes" after that date that owed nothing to Riley. It is no surprise, then, that *Swimming* emerged from thirty years of obscurity in 1917 to join Eakins' posthumous retrospective exhibitions with a new title that evoked a place now hallowed by the much-beloved and recently lamented "national" poet.[60] Susan Eakins may have altered the title unconsciously, but her revi-

sion was consistent with her wish to present her husband's work in the most favorable light. As *The Swimming Hole*, Eakins' picture became redundantly nostalgic in 1917, first as an image of Riley's site of all-American youth, then as a picture of safely generic—rather than specific—swimmers in "happy days of yore" (the 1880s), and finally as an illustration of old-fashioned "American" realism to provoke the young nationalists and modernists of New York City. Like the intervention of modern male nude subjects, these veils of nostalgia normalized the meaning of the image, making it sweeter, simpler, and more obscure.

The more problematic notes in *Swimming* find contemporary literary context in Whitman, particularly *Specimen Days* of 1884 and "Song of Myself" from *Leaves of Grass*, as noted by Elizabeth Johns in her essay.[61] For Riley, the swimming hole represented innocence; for Whitman, it became a location for revealed sexuality, healthy and innocent in its naturalness. Both poets saw swimming as a kind of bathing, anciently understood in human experience and metaphor as purification and renewal. This system of meanings joined the erotic pictorial tradition of classical bathers (Venus, Diana, and myriad nymphs) and the mixed messages of biblical bathing scenes (Susannah, Bathsheba, Christ's baptism) in Western art. However, Whitman, Riley, and Eakins all seem to have imagined the absence of narrative and the simplicity of "sweet, sane still nakedness in Nature" as especially appropriate in America, the New World. These associations, taken with the dignified, classical mood of Eakins' figures, combine to affirm the rightness of nudity in this situation. Admirable in their natural state, these men rediscover Eden in the modern age. Like the nudes in Edgar Degas' *Young Spartans* of about 1860 (see fig. 49), they reclaim the unaffected nakedness of classical Greek athletes. Their activity justifies their nudity—and Eakins' depiction of it.

Some viewers might have nodded approvingly in front of *Swimming*, enjoying a Rileyesque reverie of personal experience, and others may have accepted the synthesis of Christian and pagan values that defended nudity in this situation, but many people must have been uneasy in front of this painting, and with reason. Ultimately, like Eakins' most premeditated works, it is a tense painting. Some of this tension may be projected by viewers taken aback by so much male nudity for its own sake, with no traditional narrative justification or literary "loincloth"; for such viewers, as Whitman suspected in 1877, "it is your thought, your sophistication, your fear, your respectability" that creates indecency.[62] But much of the tension comes from Eakins, who with typical aggressiveness has thrust a particular, private, all-male event before the gaze of a mixed audience in a public art gallery. Some viewers may have been unwilling voyeurs.

And, notwithstanding Eakins' principal message about the beauty and naturalness of his figures, there is content in this painting that, in Whitmanesque fashion, is unabashedly sexual. Just as this picture is about swimming, it is about male friendship and intimacy in a place apart from women. Riley celebrated a place of innocent boyhood, but Eakins' swimming hole is populated by consenting adults, some of them young, others grizzled. Eakins may have appreciated their splendid anatomy and their complex movements artistically, but his pleasure in the subject—like his intense interest in the human body—must suggest desire. This desire, veiled in ways acceptable to the sexually repressed culture of Eakins' period, expressed itself through Eakins' "scientific" and authoritarian style, emerging as a more generalized wish to possess and control, perhaps simply by superior "knowing." Unhindered observation and depiction of the nude—both licensed by his profession—may have satisfied this need. However, Eakins' close friendship with several of his male students, added to the evidence of his sensuous and appreciative studies of the male nude, has invited further speculation about his sexuality, and an explicit narrative of homosexual love has recently been read in the swimming photographs. According to Whitney Davis, this story was revised into blander, more conventional terms in the

final painting.[63] Although Davis' analysis is overstrained, his thesis of erotic repression holds, for the tense mixture of control and voyeuristic delight seen in *Swimming* must turn upon Eakins' own sensibility. Certainly, he was a man of obsessive discipline as well as charismatic sexuality, repellant to some, attractive or provocative to others—men and women both. The stories circulating about Eakins in 1885–86, added to tales a decade later of "unnatural sexual excitements . . . in the style of Oscar Wilde," must make us sensitive to the erotic content available in this image.[64]

The sense of tight control in *Swimming* may be interpreted in twentieth-century terms as sexual repression, but it also emerges from Eakins' insistent union of science and art. The premise of a "natural," contemporary event is everywhere undercut by obvious pictorial artifice, most noticeably in the separateness of the figures, who seem isolated from one another, mentally and physically, although they are joined in a visual linkage that is more elegant and self-conscious than most of Eakins' compositional designs. This tension of continuity and discontinuity may be the inadvertent product of Eakins' method, which entailed separate modeling sessions undertaken over many months, but it also must be intentional, to underscore the layered system of references in his work. One context was intensely realistic, "scientific," and progressive, emphasizing detailed description and suggesting the truths to be learned from anatomical studies and the realm of motion photography. The second context was backward-looking and classicizing, evoking the forms of Greek sculpture and the mood of Roman pastoral poetry. The overlay of these two interests—ancient and modern, ideal and real—creates a tension that Eakins willfully manipulated to construct his meaning: that the same beauty known to the ancients is before us in "our own day"; that modern science—anatomical investigation, photographic documentation, zealous observation—will reveal more completely the "truth" that supported the beauty understood by the Greeks. As moderns, we can better understand the nature of beauty and effectively advance the classical tradition. So argued the optimistic mind of a progressive late-nineteenth-century academic naturalist.

Swimming represents, then, Eakins' sense of the artist's mission, and his responsibility to both the past and the present. First, he had to paint the figure, and paint it convincingly, to appear round, solid, weight-bearing, wonderful. In doing so, he had to be the master of technique, of modeling and perspective and reflections, and of all the pictorial deceits that would make his two-dimensional image suggest the reality of appearances. But, as the contrast between figure and ground, the self-conscious composition, and the ever-present texture of the paint surface remind us, *Swimming* is not a trompe-l'oeil illusion; it is a picture, a work of art. Nature is not re-created here but is selectively described and manipulated to express Eakins' layered vision of old and new beauty. As a demonstration of modern "picture making," *Swimming* is about necessary craftsmanship—revealed in careful planning, patient study, disciplined execution—and it is about the role of the artist, who must become a scientist to understand beauty in everyday appearances. Eakins' complex message, which embraces the magnetism of the nude human figure, the meaning of swimming, the relevance of the classical tradition, the virtues of scientific study, and the professional challenges of picture making, tells us of his ambitions for *Swimming*. His message was not well received in 1885, perhaps because controversial elements in this mix—such as realism, nudity, and corollary gossip—rose to the surface to color contemporary perceptions. The response changed as Eakins' reputation for scandal was reconfigured in the early twentieth century to signify heroic American individualism and realism. In the late twentieth century, the painting has become a mirror of present interest in gender, psychobiography, spectator response, process, and patronage. The range and sequence of reactions to *Swimming* give a useful lesson in historiography, reminding us of the ideologically charged strata of interpretation that have been superadded to Eakins' own layering. First, however, *Swimming* was an expression

of Eakins' mind—a visual manifesto, a modern and academic paradox—as well as a complex image of period culture. Tensely wrought, it remains unsettled and ambiguous, inviting—like all of Eakins' best work—renewed investigation and the continuing development of meaning.

NOTES

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1. Edward H. Coates to Thomas Eakins, November 27, 1885; in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection (hereafter Bregler Collection) at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA). For a summary see Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989), p. 172, no. 147. Coates' role as patron is discussed at greater length in Doreen Bolger's essay in this book. The actual date of the commission is not known, although entries in Eakins' pocket account book make it certain that he was at work on the project by July 1884. A newsy letter to his student J. Laurie Wallace on February 27, 1884, makes no mention of the project and comments on the housekeeping activity following his marriage to Susan Macdowell the previous month; Eakins hoped "soon to get at pictures again" (Bregler Collection and Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 156, no. 64, and pp. 213–214).

2. *Swimming* was number 88 in the academy's fifty-sixth annual exhibition, held October 30–December 11, 1885. See Peter Hastings Falk, *The Annual Exhibition Record of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1876–1913* (Madison, Conn.: Sound View Press, 1989), p. 181. Eakins' sister described the "misery" of this moment (Frances Eakins to Thomas Eakins, April 7, 1890; Bregler Collection and Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 111, no. 177).

3. [William Clark], "The Fine Arts," *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph*, November 1, 1882 (clipping file, Eakins Archive, Philadelphia Museum of Art).

4. The impact of Eakins' French training has been discussed by Gerald M. Ackerman, "Thomas Eakins and his Parisian Masters, Gérôme and Bonnat," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (April 1969): 235-256; Kathleen A. Foster, "Philadelphia and Paris: Thomas Eakins and the Beaux-Arts" (Master's paper, Yale University, 1972); H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), chaps. V and VII; and Kathleen A. Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered* (New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming), chaps. 4–6.

5. On the meaning of the William Rush subject, see Elizabeth Johns, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), chap. 4.

6. William Clark, in the *Philadelphia Telegraph*, quoted in Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 1982), 1:156.

7. Theodor Siegl, *The Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), p. 89. See Elizabeth Milroy, "'Consummatum est . . .': A Reassessment of Thomas Eakins's *Crucifixion* of 1880," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 2 (June 1989): 269–284. On Bonnat's canvas, see also sources in note 4.

8. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *Circular of the Committee on Instruction, 1882–83* (Philadelphia: PAFA, 1882), p. 3.

9. Rogers resigned for personal reasons, unrelated to the academy's program. His letter was published along with a tribute to his work on behalf of the academy, in the *Seventy-seventh Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, June 1882 to February 1884* (Philadelphia: PAFA, 1884), pp. 16–17.

10. Coates may have offered Eakins a generous commission as private compensation for the salary that the academy's board had promised Eakins in 1882 but never delivered. Rogers, who was instrumental in establishing Eakins' first salary in 1879 at the rate of six hundred dollars per year, may also have seen his patronage as a kind of unofficial salary supplement. I have discussed Eakins' friendship with Rogers, expressed in *A May Morning in the Park*, in chap. 15 of my forthcoming *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered.*

11. Quoted in David Sellin, *Thomas Eakins, Susan Macdowell Eakins, Elizabeth Macdowell Kenton* (Roanoke, Va.: Progress Press, for the North Cross School Living Gallery, 1977), p. 32.

12. Eakins' titles for these works are not known; the Arcadian terminology seems to have come from Susan Eakins, after her husband's death. She also referred to these images as Eakins' "pastoral" works. The Arcadian series has been beautifully studied by Marc Simpson in "Thomas Eakins and His Arcadian Works," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 71–95. See also Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:230–237. I discuss the Arcadian studies recently found in Charles Bregler's collection in "Nudes: The Camera in 'Arcadia,'" chap. 17 of *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered.*

13. For references to this lost relief see Sarah Cash's essay, note 29.

14. Many scholars have noted the formal qualities of antique or Renaissance art in *Swimming*: see, for example, Simpson, "Arcadian Works"; Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:239; Oliver Larkin, *Art and Life in America*, rev. ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), p. 278.

15. Eakins' high opinion of Phidias was quoted by his wife in a letter to George Barker, July 9, 1936 (Bregler Collection; Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 308, and Simpson, "Arcadian Works," p. 74).

16. From W. C. Brownell's interview with Eakins in "The Art Schools of Philadelphia," *Scribner's Monthly Illustrated Magazine* (September 1879), quoted in Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:173–174.

17. "Academy Exhibition . . . Second Notice," *Philadelphia Press*, October 31[?], 1885 (clipping scrapbook, PAFA).

18. Susan Eakins to Alton O'Steen, July 9, 1936 (Bregler Collection; see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 307).

19. Charles Bregler, "Thomas Eakins as I Knew Him," manuscript, Bregler Collection; see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 328, and fiche series IV 13/D/12. In *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, chap. 8, I investigate the truth of Bregler's observation while looking to the similar importance of preconception in Gérôme's work.

20. Eakins' pocket account book (Dietrich Collection) records cumulative expenses for photography and carfare through July 31, 1884, probably relating to this project. On the site and the participants, see Sarah Cash's essay in this volume.

21. The only surviving pencil drawing from this series is a quick notebook sketch of two draped women, evidently for the Arcadia paintings, and probably made from Eakins' photographs (Bregler Collection; see Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, cat. no. 204). On Eakins' shift from graphic media to paint and sculpture, and on the domains created for each of his media, see ibid., chaps. 7 and 8.

22. Most of Eakins' field sketches are organized into two size groups: a large panel, about 10 by 14 inches (as in pls. 12, 17, 18); and a smaller panel, about 4 by 5¾ inches (pls. 15, 16). The larger box is no longer extant, although its existence was first proposed by Theodor Siegl in his examination of the many 10-by-14-inch panels in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (*The Thomas Eakins Collection*, p. 73). The Hirshhorn's panel (pl. 13) is smaller than the others in its group, but it evidently has been cut down. Eakins seems to have used the larger box from 1877 to 1887, the period when he was most interested in outdoor subjects; the smaller one was used less often, mostly between 1881 and 1885, and once again in 1899. All the sketches in the smaller format were formerly in the collection of Charles Bregler, who gave the box and two panels to the Fort Worth Art Association about 1945, via an intermediary at Knoedler's Gallery in New York. The second panel has a green ground, but no image.

23. Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:239.

24. There is always a chance that other sketches once existed, and that the surviving materials misrepresent Eakins' procedures for any given painting. However, circumstances during and after Eakins' lifetime have conspired to save an unusually large percentage of such preparatory works, allowing generalization about his working methods overall. On the provenance of Eakins' studio materials and the representativeness of surviving work, see Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, introduction; on the development of the composition of *Arcadia*, see chap. 17.

25. Susan Eakins to Mrs. Lewis R. Dick, c. 1930 (Bregler Collection; Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 300).

26. Two small landscape sketches on the verso of this panel do not seem to be related to the site of *Swimming*, or to other known landscape paintings. In style, subject, and palette they are like other small landscape vignettes from the early 1880s, especially the sketches he made in Gloucester, now in the Bregler Collection (PAFA). Like the small landscape study for *Swimming* in the Dietrich collection (pl. 19), which has a study for *Mending the Net* of 1881 (Philadelphia Museum of Art) on its verso, the two sides of the Orr panel may have been painted on outings several years apart.

27. Eakins' habits in composing images from the inside out, with the framing edges determined last, emerge from my study of the Bregler Collection; see *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, particularly chaps. 8 and 19.

28. The use of these nude, outdoor photographs as compositional aides is discussed in Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, chap. 17.

29. The best-known example of this is the landscape photo (Gordon Hendricks, *The Photographs of Thomas Eakins* [New York: Grossman, 1972], no. 53) used for the background of *An Arcadian* (Spanierman Gallery, New York). Other examples have emerged with the Bregler Collection, including photographic landscape studies used as compositional formats in several Delaware River subjects. See Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, chap. 16. Unlike these purposeful landscape and figure photos, the swimming pictures have much in common with the large group of outdoor nude studies found in the Bregler Collection. Mostly featuring Eakins, Wallace, and Anshutz, these figure subjects are unrelated to known projects and seem to have been exploratory "portfolio" work, independently satisfying and also available for future reference.

30. Goodrich speculated that the photographs preceded the oil sketch, which was developed from them (*Thomas Eakins*, 1:241), and Whitney Davis' interpretation of the painting grows from the assumption that the photographs came first; see his "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301–341. Davis depends on the old dating of the photographs (asserted by Hendricks), based on the misreading of the date on the painting (1883) to propose a gradual distillation and revision of imagery through the oil sketches, concluding with the completion of the painting in 1885. I believe that photos and sketches must have been done at about the same time in the summer of 1884, with the first individual modeling sessions for the final canvas begun that fall. However, speculation about dating or sequences cannot dismantle Davis' larger thesis, which posits Eakins' wish to suppress an unacceptably erotic narrative available in the photographs.

31. For this reason, as well as the difficulty in establishing the identity and reappearance of certain "characters" throughout the photographs, I find it difficult (but also unnecessary) to accept the specificity and continuity in the "narratives" read into these photographs by Whitney Davis (ibid.). Eakins' appearance (mostly unremarked by Davis) in three of these images (all but Hendricks no. 42, which remains unclear) has been detected in the new prints or negatives in the Bregler Collection; see Susan Danly and Cheryl Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994), nos. 393, 394, 395. The presence of duplicate prints of many "Eakins" photos (although not the Bryn Mawr subjects) in the Thomas Anshutz Papers at the Archives of American Art confirms Anshutz's participation in PAFA photography projects from 1882 to 1885. Sarah Cash's identification of Talcott Williams as the reclining bather at the left in the painting also makes him a candidate as Eakins' photographer, since Williams shared Eakins' (and Coates') interest in photography; see Cash's essay. Alternatively, as Davis suggests, one of the students seen in the wrestling and boxing photos (where Eakins is not visible) could have taken a turn behind the camera.

32. William Innes Homer, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Art* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), p. 116. Others, beginning with Theodor Siegl, have suggested that the figure-ground contrast seen in Eakins' landscapes of the 1880s was suggested by the shallow depth of field in some contemporary photographs. While this may be true, none of Eakins' own photographs of this site show such exaggerated contrast.

33. Three prints (and both platinums) are in the Bregler Collection, PAFA; two are in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The many large prints of this image may signal that it was one of two photographs of bathers exhibited in 1900 by the New York Camera Club, from the collection of Eva Watson-Schutze. (My thanks to Lily Milroy for bringing this information to my attention.) The other vintage prints are albumen. Speculation about Eakins' taste in these photographs is hampered by the fact that, according to Charles Bregler, Susan Eakins did some printing for her husband, sometimes years after the negative was made. Likewise, cropping may be by the hand of others. However, Susan Eakins' taste consistently seconded her husband's, and Eakins' patterns of compositional cropping in his paintings echo the cropping style seen in his photographs. It is also worth noting that many prints revealing the extensive use of camera studies survive for the Arcadian works, indicating that Eakins made no effort to destroy the evidence of his methods. On Eakins' use of photography, see *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, chap. 11, and Danly and Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph*.

34. Goodrich recollected seeing the unfinished *Arcadian* with one fully resolved figure staring expectantly across the meadow at an empty stretch of grass that held only the (now-vanished) chalk sketch of a piper that Eakins intended to add; Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:233. Also from this same period is *The Meadows, Gloucester* (see fig. 70), with a landscape that was completed before the addition of the cows; see Siegl's conservation notes, PMA archives. On Eakins' landscape method in this series, see *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, chap. 16. Although Eakins painted outdoors on many occasions in the 1870s and 1880s, there is no evidence or testimony that he took his final "studio" canvas into the field. Like a traditional academic, he seems to have worked at home from plein-air sketches.

35. The central bather is about 9¾ inches tall on the canvas, a size that indicates that Eakins was working to an intended dimension on the surface (about 10 inches) and not a fraction of

life scale (which would be slightly less than one-seventh). His lack of concern with a convenient fraction (usually seen in his earlier work, based on careful perspective schemas) as well as the slight transferring grids and preliminary oil studies, may hint at the use of photographic images, now lost. For *Arcadia*, he enlarged a photographic study of a reclining nude boy (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; unpublished print of Hendricks no. 48) to exactly the size needed on his canvas, and then crossed it with a graphite grid to establish transfer points; *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, chap. 17.

36. See Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:243, and Charles Bregler, "Thomas Eakins as a Teacher," *The Arts* 18 (October 1931): 40. Adam Emory Albright remembered that Eakins "modeled the figure of the diving boy in plastiline and put a spindle through the middle of the figure so that it could be turned upside down and hold the pose" ("Memories of Thomas Eakins," *Harper's Bazaar* 81, no. 2828 [August 1947]: 139). Susan Eakins also wrote that "in the picture 'The Swimming Hole' Eakins modeled the diving figure in wax and then painted from it" (Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 300).

37. Many of these sums are mentioned in Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:322. The last of his expenses for the painting seem to be recorded in August 1885.

38. Quoted from "Reflections in the Water," in Eakins' manuscript on linear perspective, c. 1884 (Philadelphia Museum of Art). Davis has suggested that this extended reflection was willfully distorted in order to link the figure with Eakins, who reaches out to fondle his friend's reflection ("Erotic Revision," p. 332). While I believe that Eakins was attempting optical correctness in this reflection, and that he does not actually intersect Reynolds' image, a psychological narrative of longing (and exclusion) still seems accessible in this configuration.

39. "Academy Exhibition. Fifty-sixth Annual Display," October 29, 1885 (clipping scrapbook, PAFA archives, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [hereafter AAA], roll P53).

40. "The Academy Pictures. How the Exhibition at the Academy Compares with Those Elsewhere," *Philadelphia Press*, October 29, 1885; "Academy Exhibition. A Running View of the Portraits," October 31[?], 1885 (clipping scrapbook, PAFA archives).

41. "The Fine Arts," (Philadelphia) *Evening Telegraph*, October 31, 1885. This response may have come from his longtime supporter, William Clark, the author of earlier art criticism for this newspaper. These few, nondescript comments were the only notice Eakins received in seven articles on the exhibition in this paper (see clipping scrapbook, PAFA archives).

42. "At the Private View: First Impressions of the Autumn Exhibition at the Academy of the Fine Arts," October 29, 1885 (clipping scrapbook, PAFA archives). Interestingly, the brighter and more vivaciously painted *Bord de mer* by Alexander Harrison, also a bathing subject and one of the most commented-upon pictures in the show, was also characterized by this reviewer as "trompe l'oeil" and photographic, merely "clever" and "superficial."

43. L[eslie]. W. M[iller]., "Art. The Awards of Prizes at the Academy," *The American*, November 7, 1885 (clipping scrapbook, PAFA archives). Miller commented on the "very strange things" that Eakins had produced in the past, "compelling admiration for his knowledge and skill in certain important respects." He made no further reference to Eakins in two other articles reviewing this exhibition.

44. After several years of rival exhibitions, in 1885 the academy made peace with the Philadelphia Society of Artists and invited a hanging committee composed entirely of local artists. The resulting exhibition included almost twice as many works as the annual of 1884 and was generally judged to be of much higher interest.

45. Other newspapers consulted, mostly in the PAFA clipping scrapbook, include the Philadelphia *Evening Call* (2 articles), the Philadelphia *Ledger* (2), the Philadelphia *News* (1), the *North American* (1), the Philadelphia *Bulletin* (2), the Philadelphia *Record* (2). Other than the *Art Interchange* (1 article), the New York newspapers and periodicals I surveyed (e.g., the *Times*, the *Tribune*, *Century*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Harper's Monthly*, the *Nation*) gave the exhibition short shrift.

46. Miller, "The Awards of Prizes."

47. Coates to Eakins, November 27, 1885.

48. On August 25, 1884, Anshutz wrote to Wallace that Eakins was "painting a picture for Mr. Coates of a party of boys in swimming" (transcript by George Barker on deposit at Philadelphia Museum of Art, copy courtesy of William I. Homer). The involvement or knowledge of senior students like Anshutz suggests that many people at the school knew about the commission, which must have made the rejection of the painting all the more humiliating for Eakins.

49. *Telegraph*, October 30, 1885. See Doreen Bolger's essay for the comments of one writer who objected to the frontal nudity in Harrison's *Bord de mer*. Another critic described Harrison's work as the last word in realism, expressing "healthy" naturalness in "the spirit of the great Greek art." But this reviewer seconded many others in concluding that Harrison's subject was not important enough to justify the grand Salon scale of his canvas. *Philadelphia Times*, November 1, 1885.

50. On Eakins' dismissal from the academy, see Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:282–294; and Foster and Leibold, "'Trouble' at the Pennsylvania Academy" and "The Art Club Scandals: 'Misrepresentations and foul lies,'" in *Writing About Eakins*, pp. 69–89.

51. Eakins to Coates, September 11, 1886 (Bregler Collection, PAFA, and Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 157, no. 69, p. 175, no. 162, and pp. 235–238).

52. *Catalogue of the Paintings Exhibited by the Inter-State Industrial Exposition of Chicago Fifteenth Annual Exhibition*, September 7–October 22, 1887, no. 140. I am grateful to Elizabeth Milroy for this new information.

53. Ibid., p. 238. On this new scandal in 1895, see Foster and Leibold, "The 'Nude' at Drexel," in *Writing About Eakins*, pp. 93–95.

54. Doreen Bolger and Claire M. Barry, "Thomas Eakins's 'Swimming Hole,'" *Antiques* 145 (March 1994): 410.

55. Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris*, p. 98. Simpson notes the formal relationship between Eakins' photographic motion studies and his evocation of classical freize compositions ("Arcadian Works," pp. 84–86). Bregler remembered the zoetrope Eakins set up on the table in the academy's library, about the same time this painting was under way; see Bregler to PAFA, May 11, 1953 (PAFA archives, and Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, cat. no. 91).

56. Donald Walker, *British Manly Exercises*, 11th rev. ed. (London: Bell and Daldy, 1871), p. 82. Also published under the title *Walker's Manly Exercises*, this book appeared in numerous Philadelphia imprints beginning in 1837.

57. On the organization of competitive swimming in the 1840s, see François Oppenheim, *The History of Swimming* (Hollywood, Calif.: Swimming World, 1970). Titles of exhibited works are indexed in Anna Wells Rutledge, *Cumulative Record of Exhibition Catalogues, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1807–1870* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955). 'Swimming' titles also make no appearance in William H. Gerdts and James L. Yarnall's *National Museum of American Art's Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues* (New York: G. K. Hall, 1986), or in Robert J. Perkins, Jr., and William J. Gavin III, *The Boston Athenaeum Art Exhibition Index, 1827–1874* (Boston: The Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1980). Male bathers are very rare in these listings, although the occasional Narcissus or Hylas can be found.

58. See *"The Old Swimmin'-Hole" and 'Leven More Poems / by Benj. F. Johnson of Boone* (Indianapolis: George C. Hitt, 1883). The first edition of one thousand sold out by the fall of 1883, when a second printing, with revisions, was made. "In his readings he was nearly always introduced as the author of "The Old Swimmin'-Hole"—so popular recognition determined the title of the book" (Marcus Dickey, *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley* [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1922], p. 160).

59. Although posing as an old farmer, Riley was born in 1849 and so was close to Eakins' age. Eakins' interest in dialect poetry and regional culture is evidenced by his illustrations to Bret Harte's "Spellin' Bee at Angel's," published in *Scribner's Magazine* in November 1878, and his "local color" illustrations for "A Day in the Ma'sh," in *Scribner's* in 1881. His sympathetic portrayal of contemporary blacks in the watercolor *The Negroes* of 1878 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) parallels Joel Chandler Harris' work of this same period. The popularity of "folk" culture at this moment might be represented by the contents of the September 1883 issue of the *Century* (the successor to *Scribner's*), which contained an article on Robert Burns, "Nights with Uncle Remus" by Harris, and Riley's "In Swimming-Time," another reverie of leafy coverts where "nude little bodies poise and leap."

60. Although Eakins noted the receipt of money for *Swimming* in his account book, he never made an entry for the painting in the notebooks that recorded the exhibition history and dispersal of his work. This may tell us something about his wish to forget the circumstances of its rejection, and it probably explains why Susan Eakins had no record of its original title when she lent the work to the retrospective exhibitions of 1917–18.

61. F. O. Matthiessen first noted the connection between *Swimming* and Whitman's verse, particularly the section "Twenty-eight young men" from "Song of Myself" in *Leaves of Grass*, which received its first mainstream publication in its eighth edition of 1881; see *The American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 610; Evan Turner, introduction to *The Thomas Eakins Collection*, p. 26; and Goodrich, citing *Specimen Days* in *Thomas Eakins*, 1:230.

62. Goodrich, ibid.

63. Davis, "Erotic Revision." Michael Fried was the first to apply Freudian theory to interpret the sexual scenarios in Eakins' *Gross Clinic*; see *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Fried's brilliant analysis stresses Eakins' wish for knowledge and control, a theme brought forward in Elizabeth Johns' important study *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life*.

64. For a discussion of Eakins' sexuality and its disastrous effect on two of his women students in the 1890s, see Foster and Leibold, "The Hammitt Case: 'A most unfortunate lady'" and "Ella Crowell's Suicide," in *Writing About Eakins*, pp. 95–121.

Doreen Bolger

"Kindly Relations": Edward Hornor Coates and *Swimming*

Relatively little is known about the early history of Thomas Eakins' *Swimming* or the circumstances of its commission. Edward Hornor Coates (1846–1921), a Philadelphia businessman and philanthropist, had commissioned the painting by the summer of 1884. It was completed by October 1885, when it was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with Coates listed prominently as its owner.[1] We do not know why Coates commissioned the picture or how much he had to do with the selection of the specific subject or the development of the composition. Indeed, since he never received the painting at his home and returned it to the artist during the time of its debut exhibition, we might even conclude that Coates was surprised and disappointed by *Swimming*. Yet Coates (figs. 10, 11) was a close associate of the artist and a patron well equipped to understand Eakins' artistic approach and his point of view as a teacher. Eakins, for his part, knew Coates well enough to anticipate his response to *Swimming*.

Coates and Eakins were almost exact contemporaries, although the patron's family background and mercantile achievements brought him a level of financial security and social acceptability far different from that of the artist.[2] Born into a Philadelphia Quaker family that had arrived there in the 1680s, Coates was one of seven sons born to Joseph Potts Hornor Coates and his wife, Eliza Henri Troth. He was educated at nearby Haverford College, a Quaker school, graduating in 1864. His college curriculum comprised the arts and humanities, including extensive study of Greek and Latin classics and instruction in perspective and mechanical drawing.[3] Coates became a financier, working in the cotton industry and investing in banks and insurance until his retirement in 1888, at the age of forty-four.[4] In 1872 he was one of one hundred members of the Board of Finance, which supported the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, the single most important art event that occurred in the city during the nineteenth century.[5]

In 1879 Coates married a young widow, Florence Earle Nicholson (1850–1927), the daughter of a wealthy Philadelphia lawyer. Educated in Paris and Brussels, she became a recognized poet.[6] Together the Coateses developed a circle of cultivated friends who gathered at Willing Terrace, their Germantown, Pennsylvania, home; at their townhouse on Spruce Street; and at their summer retreat, Elsinore, on Upper St. Regis Lake in the Adirondacks, where the actor Otis Skinner and his wife, the actress Maud Durbin, as well as the poet Lizette Woodworth Reese were their neighbors. The Coateses participated in the heady artistic and literary life of Philadelphia, counting among their friends and acquaintances the painters Eakins and William Trost Richards, the physician S. Weir Mitchell, and the writers Horace Traubel and Talcott Williams.[7]

Although active in artistic circles, Coates does not appear to have been a serious art collector. No full catalogue of his holdings survives, but from time to time he lent works to academy exhibitions, leaving us with tantalizing hints about his taste in art.[8] Coates did support several Philadelphia artists associated with the Pennsylvania Academy, notably the landscape painter Richards, with whom he carried on an active correspondence, as well as Thomas Hovenden, Charles Grafly, and Robert Vonnoh, all academy instructors.[9] His stated preference, however, was for the French Barbizon

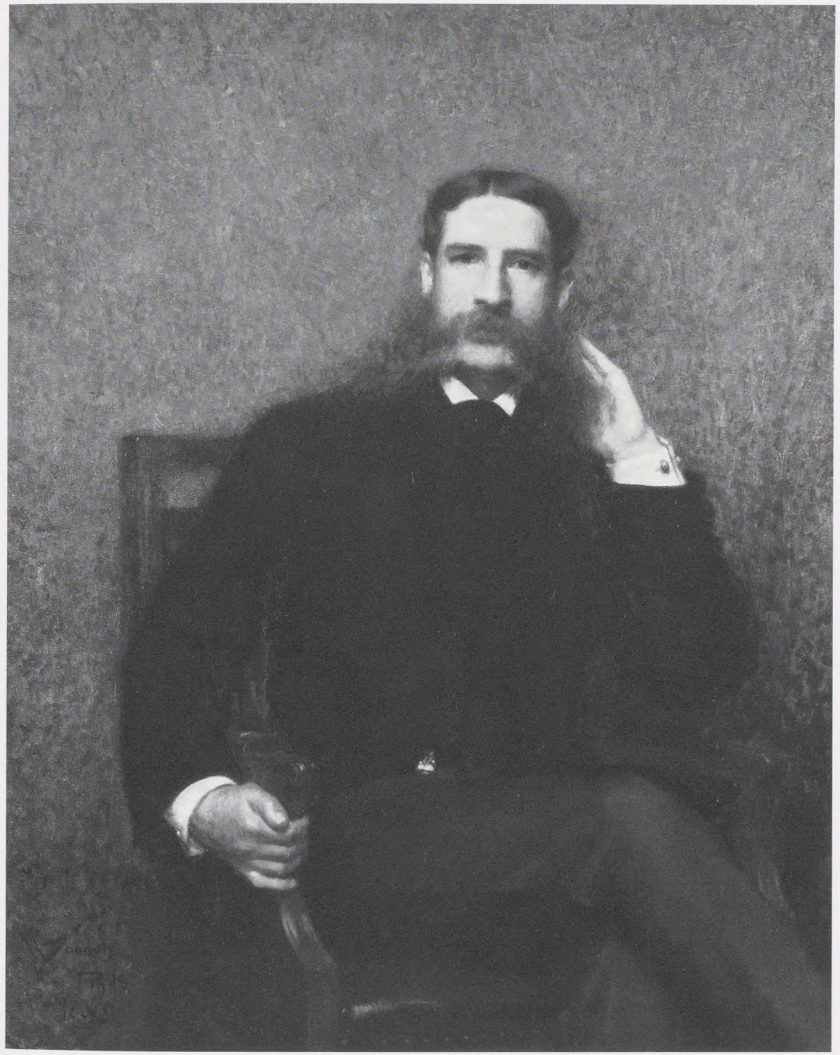


FIG. 10. Robert W. Vonnoh, *Edward Hornor Coates*, 1893, oil on canvas, 50⅛ x 40⅛ in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Mrs. Edward H. Coates (The Edward H. Coates Memorial Collection)

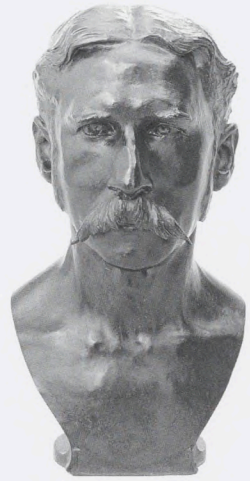


FIG. 11. Charles Grafly, *Edward Hornor Coates*, 1903, bronze with black patina, cast between 1903–1905, 18½ x 9¾ x 10 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Mrs. E. H. Coates (The Edward H. Coates Memorial Collection)

School, represented in his personal collection by works by Charles-François Daubigny, Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de la Peña, Jules Dupré, Charles-Émile Jacque, and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. Coates' enthusiasm for this French school of landscape painting reflects the prevailing American taste of the period. During the 1870s and 1880s more and more American collectors were turning away from the ambitious, highly detailed landscape views of the Hudson River School and purchasing instead more sketchily painted landscapes that captured artists' direct impressions of nature.[10] Coates clearly saw his life enhanced by the art that surrounded him. "The love of art, like the love of nature—and one always brings the other or is born with it—grows upon us with ever increasing force," he explained in 1890, "and the time comes when, endowed with new power of vision, the old ideals are thrown aside, we wander with Diaz in the woods of Fontainebleau, or on the borders of the Seine with Daubigny; gaze upon the wastes of Old Ocean with Richards, or sail across the grand Canal at Venice with Turner, Rico or Moran, with real delight."[11]

Coates can be distinguished from dozens of his mercantile contemporaries largely by his philanthropic efforts on behalf of the Pennsylvania Academy. There he became a member of the board of trustees in 1877, serving as treasurer from 1878 to 1886 and as chairman of the Committee on Instruction from 1884 to 1890. Coates thus presided over the final and most tumultuous phase of Eakins' ten-year teaching career at the academy, which stretched from 1876 until his forced resignation in 1886. In 1890 Coates succeeded George S. Pepper as president, a post he held until 1906.[12] Throughout his years as president, Coates put all of his effort into unpaid positions at the academy, spending Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings at the school and doubtless devoting many other hours to academy business.[13]

Early on, Eakins and Coates seem to have enjoyed a fairly cordial relationship. With Eakins as director of the school and Coates as chairman of the Committee on Instruction, they worked together closely, so that Coates would have been kept well informed about Eakins' artistic program at the academy school. Coates succeeded Fairman Rogers who, as chairman of the committee, had played an extremely supportive role in implementing Eakins' pedagogical ideas.[14] Coates may have asked Eakins for a painting in an effort to continue a tradition begun by Rogers, who had commissioned Eakins' *May Morning in the Park* of 1879 (pl. 8) during his tenure in the same post. The paintings Eakins did for Rogers and Coates encapsulate many features of his teaching program, displaying his achievements in observing nature and depicting light, anatomy, and movement. In fact, they are Eakins' only painterly attempts at representing motion. As Kathleen Foster points out in her essay, Coates, like Rogers, may have viewed the commission as a supplement to the artist's salary, for, although Eakins had been promised an increase in his salary in 1882, the extra money had never been forthcoming. Coates may also have seen this commission as a way of reassuring Eakins of Coates' continuing support of the artist's academic program. All these features may have inspired Coates to conceive of *Swimming*

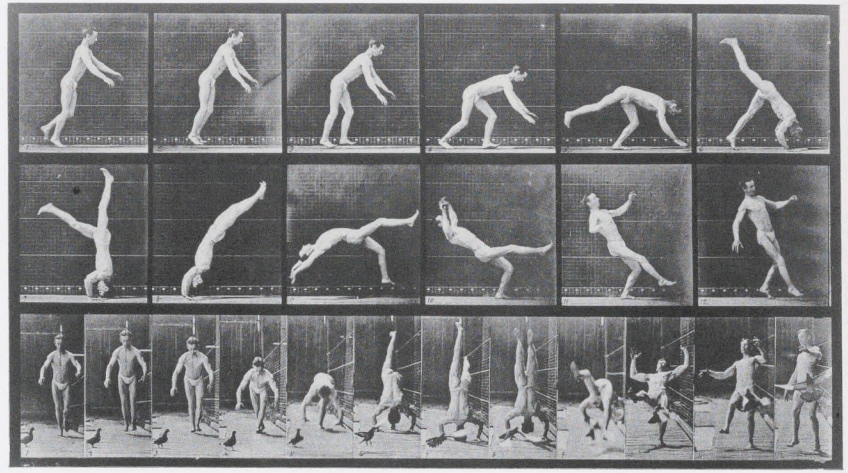


FIG. 12. Eadweard Muybridge, *Animal Locomotion—Plate 365—Male Nude: Head Spring*, 1887, collotype photograph on linen paper, 19⅛ x 24⅛ in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, City of Philadelphia Trade and Convention Center, Department of Commerce

as destined for the exhibition galleries of the academy. As he later confided in Eakins: "one of my chief ideas was to have from you a picture which *might* some day become part of the Academy collection."[15]

The subject matter of *Swimming* relates to several areas where Coates' individual interests intersected with those of Eakins. Both men were devoted to the scientific study of the nude and were fascinated with antiquity. At first glance these aspects of Coates' taste seem contradictory, if not mutually exclusive, but in fact they are compatible and correspond well to aspects of Eakins' artistic complexity. Eakins was a consummate realist preoccupied with scientific questions about anatomy, movement, and perspective, but, particularly in the early 1880s, he also was struggling with conflicting aesthetic issues—realism versus idealism, historicism versus modernity, academicism versus avant-garde thinking—and these opposites found expression, even some resolution, in the painting he made for Coates. These

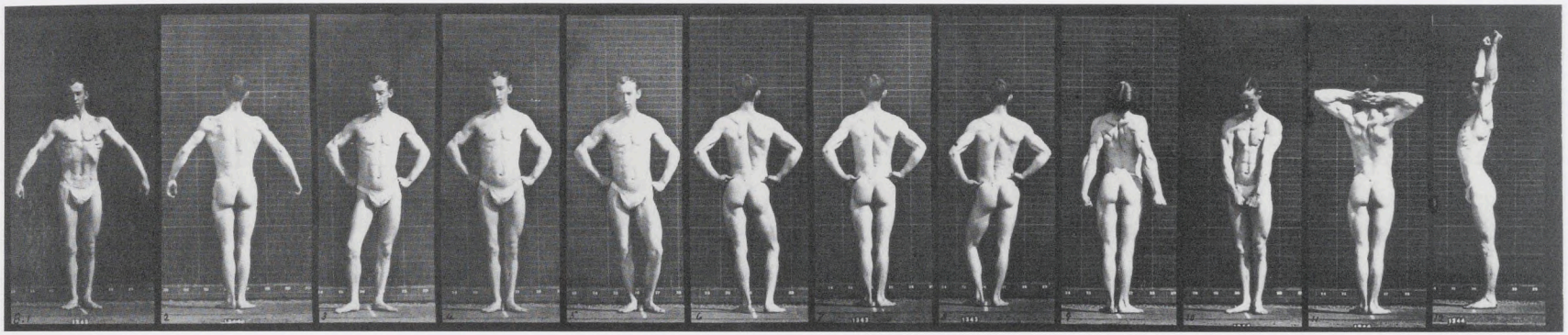


FIG. 13. Eadweard Muybridge, *Plate 321.B: Posing*, from *Animal Locomotion*, 1887, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

common interests may even have determined some of Eakins' aesthetic choices in the creation of *Swimming*, as well as Coates' decisions to commission and later to reject the painting.

As a result of their activities at the academy, Eakins and Coates had become acquainted with Eadweard Muybridge, who lectured and exhibited his work at the academy twice in February 1883. The Philadelphians then became involved in Muybridge's investigation of human and animal locomotion at the University of Pennsylvania (fig. 12). Muybridge's work done there on the human nude in motion, begun in 1883, was published four years later.[16] Muybridge worked at the university under the supervision of a commission comprising nine members—the university provost, six science professors, and two representatives from the Pennsylvania Academy, Coates and Eakins. When it became apparent that the cost of Muybridge's study would exceed its meager budget, Coates was among the six Philadelphians who agreed to pledge five thousand dollars each toward the project.[17] It seems likely, then, that Muybridge's scientific efforts informed not only Eakins' own photographic studies of human locomotion in 1884 and his painted investigation of the human figure in *Swimming*, but also Coates' heightened interest in the human figure in motion.

Eakins' composition could be viewed both as an application of Muybridge's discoveries and as an artistic challenge to the supremacy of the camera. In *Swimming*, Eakins' figures show a full range of poses—from stasis (reclining, sitting, standing) to motion (reaching, diving, swimming). His choice of title for the painting—*Swimming*—accentuates action and movement rather than person or place, taking up the subject of Muybridge's scientific endeavor and patterning its active, descriptive title on those of Muybridge's plates. Even Eakins' motionless figures, captured in staged positions, recall such Muybridge photographs as *Posing* (fig. 13). For an artist like Eakins, trained in the academic tradition of the École des Beaux-Arts, these references to the work of others were an acceptable, even desirable means to developing a composition. In this case, Eakins may be acknowledging a new scientific source as he would have done a traditional artistic one.

From Eakins' point of view, however, the scientific correctness of his figures was only one step in the development of his paintings. His figures were not merely accurately recorded; they were artistically arranged in a carefully integrated composition that could not have been achieved by photography alone. At the same time, by incorporating photography into a working process that drew equally on the canon of art history—including,

as Kathleen Foster and Elizabeth Johns have indicated in their essays, classical antiquity—Eakins challenged Muybridge's claims for his medium. In an 1883 article published in Philadelphia, Muybridge had praised the photographer and dismissed the fine artist, who, with a few exceptions, he believed, "accept[ed] as authentic without further inquiry, the pictorial and sculptural representations of moving animals bequeathed from the remote ages of tradition."[18] In *Swimming* Eakins demonstrated that painters could serve two masters, science and art.

Prior to the publication of Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion* in 1887, members of the supervisory committee discussed suppressing some of the photographer's nude figure studies. Coates' conditional comments on Muybridge's photographs of nudes hint at what his reaction to the painted nudes in Eakins' *Swimming* might have been the previous year. In September 1886 Coates acknowledged his doubts about the propriety of some of Muybridge's photographs and admitted that objections to them were likely. Coates concluded: "If the work is to be published at all the usual question as to the study of the nude in art and science must be answered Yes. At the same time there are *probably* some line[s?] to be drawn with regard to some of the plates."[19]

Given his reaction to the plates in *Animal Locomotion*, it is curious that Coates became the recipient of a group of Eakins' nude photographs now known as the Naked series—a fact that was not discovered until 1978.[20] At that time some forty-one mounted groups of photographic images, thirteen of them duplicates, were found in a bank vault among the possessions of Coates' descendants. Each of these series consists of seven separate contact prints (3 x 1 in.) mounted on a rectangular piece of cardboard (fig. 14). Those combined on a single mounting show a nude model in a series of different poses. Eakins might have intended these images for his own use in the studio, as well as for classroom display.[21] He made drawings after these photographs, and it seems likely that his students did, too.[22]

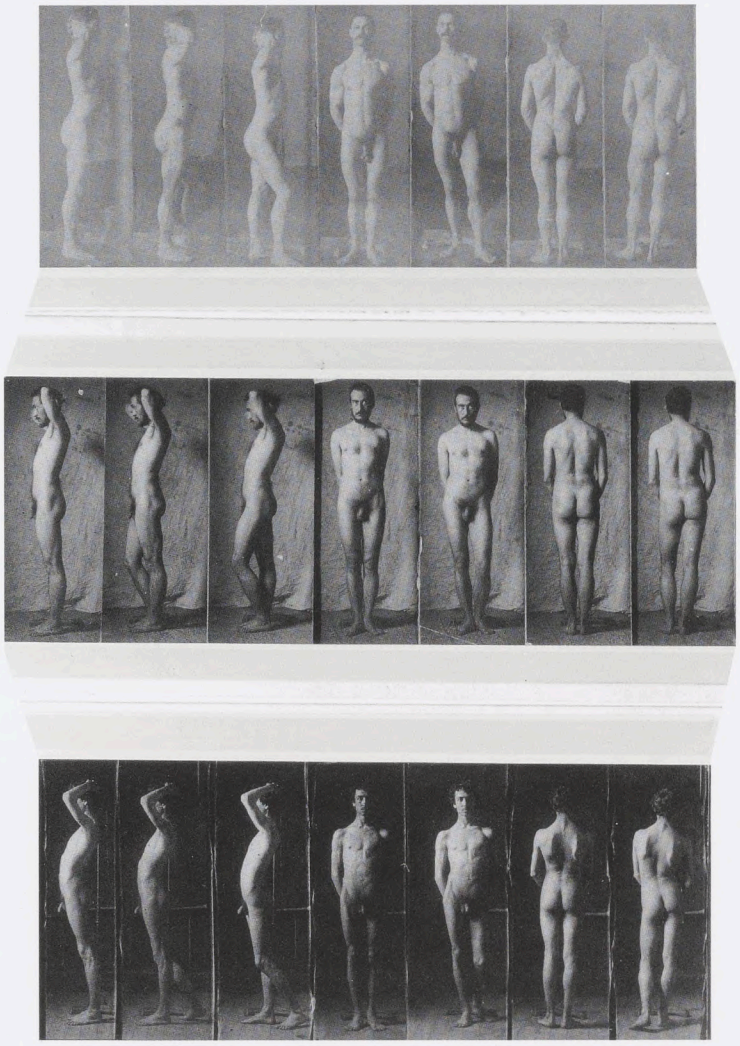


FIG. 14. Thomas Eakins and His Circle, *Jesse Godley* [sic], *Thomas Eakins, John Laurie Wallace*, 1883–84, albumen prints mounted on cardboard, a. 3 5/16 x 7 11/16 in., b. 3 1/16 x 8 3/8 in., c. 3 1/8 x 7 7/16 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, SmithKline Beckman (now Beecham) Corporation for the Ars Medica Collection, 1984-89-6,3,1

The forty-one series of images were found wrapped in brown paper bearing a label—"Mr. Edwd H. Coates / 116 Chestnut St / From Acady of the Fine Arts"—written by H. C. Whipple, then curator and librarian of the school.[23] It is presumed that Whipple sent this material to Coates when it would still have been highly controversial, and when Coates, then head of the Committee on Instruction, would have been the logical person in the chain of authority to have received it.[24] That the Naked series remained hidden for so long indicates that Coates was uneasy about its widespread circulation, but that he saved the images rather than destroying them also suggests his esteem for the artist who made them a part of the academy's program.

These teaching devices would have illustrated Eakins' pedagogical approach and might even have been presented to Coates as evidence of the artist's excessive insistence on pupils studying the human nude. Of course, photographs of this kind were likely no surprise to Coates—if he was unaware of their use at the academy by Eakins and his students, he would still have found them familiar from his involvement in Muybridge's studies. But they may have seemed more threatening because of their relationship to *Swimming*. There is some duplication of models between the photographs and the painting. Eakins is pictured in these graphic images, and John Laurie Wallace may be as well (see fig. 14).[25] The photographs, most likely sent to Coates around the time of Eakins' dismissal from the academy in 1886, would have confirmed his anxiety about the artist and his sense of propriety. They may have agitated a moralistic streak in Coates' temperament and set him further at odds with the painter he had so admired. Coates, who deemed "earnest sincerity and genuine purpose" as requirements for the pursuit of art, might have questioned the appropriateness of Eakins' photographs.[26]

In addition to their common interest in the study of the nude, artist and patron shared an admiration of the classical past. Eakins' well-known devotion to the antique is explored in this publication in the essays of Kathleen Foster and Elizabeth Johns. Coates' preoccupation with antiquity emerges repeatedly in his few known comments on things artistic. In an address to the academy membership in 1890, he invoked a statement by Sir Henry Maine, an authority on ancient law: "Except for the blind forces of nature nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in origin." Coates even found resonances of the classical past in the works of progressive nineteenth-century French artists. He urged his listeners to "wait with Corot, behind a clump of silver hazel bushes to catch the tones of the ringing lyre of Orpheus, as he salutes the triumphant morn." In the same address, he expressed his desire that the Pennsylvania Academy purchase additional casts after antique sculpture.[27] In 1905 he was an incorporator of the American Academy in Rome,[28] an arts organization that celebrated the study of the classical past.

Eakins painted *Swimming* at the end of a series of more obviously Arcadian compositions done from 1879 to 1885. In these paintings, sculptures, and photographs, men and women, nude and costumed, seem to inhabit an idealized world that evokes classical antiquity. This modern view of the ancient world would have appealed to Coates and his wife, both of whom may have anticipated receiving a picture such as *Arcadia* (pl. 11), where nudity is ennobled (and distanced) through suggestions of another time and place. Instead, Eakins presented them with *Swimming*, which continues the outdoor setting and nudity of the Arcadian series, but moves both to the present day. Here, as Foster explains in her essay, Eakins believed he was expressing classical ideas, but he went beyond classicizing costumes and accessories and instead endeavored to create a picture embodying the essence of his appreciation of classical art. Eakins asserted that the ancients based their art on direct study of nature, as he did, and his aim was to apply similar standards of beauty to modern subjects. Coates may not have been prepared to move so smoothly from Eakins' earlier Arcadian subjects, with togas and panpipes,



FIG. 15. Violet Oakley, *Tragic Muse*, 1912, oil on canvas, 29 15/16 x 24 15/16 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Mrs. Edward H. Coates (The Edward H. Coates Memorial Collection)

to a more contemporary distillation of classical principles. Moreover, as Sarah Cash explains in her essay, Eakins portrayed recognizable models in his circle, depicted in a suburban Philadelphia setting. Coates would have known these men from his work at the academy. The model for the reclining figure, Talcott Williams, was a member of the Coateses' social set, as was Mrs. Williams, and it seems likely that the display of his naked body in their home would have caused the Coateses some discomfort.[29] These men were not anonymous ancients, but identifiable Philadelphians.

Coates' admiration of the classical past was nurtured by his wife, Florence (fig. 15), who tempered his scientific bent with her interests in art and literature. Mrs. Coates' literary work, admired in her lifetime by the likes of Thomas Hardy and William Butler Yeats and acclaimed during the early years of the twentieth century, is now regarded with far less enthusiasm.[30] Her work—the first volume of her poetry appeared in 1898, but individual poems were printed earlier in popular magazines—reflected her enthusiasm for Hellenism, a sometimes sentimental devotion to antiquity often associated with followers of the Aesthetic movement of the 1870s and 1880s. Her poems are populated with gods and goddesses and set in the ancient world. Mrs. Coates wrote nature lyrics, which regularly feature mythological figures, such as Pan, communing with nature. One brief poem, "Music," will suffice to suggest her poems' frequent allusions to antiquity:

> The might of music, and its mystic fire,
> Will from no studied Art alone proceed;
> The soul of Orpheus must infuse the lyre,
> The breath of Pan must blow the plaintive reed.[31]

Even if Mrs. Coates' writing and Eakins' art are not directly connected, they both may have found common inspiration in the ideas of a more important contemporary writer, the British poet and critic Matthew Arnold (1822–1888).[32] Arnold's writings were read widely in America, and his

ideas were rapidly absorbed into popular American literature, reinforcing the interest in Hellenism.[33] Mrs. Coates, who later wrote articles defending Arnold and dedicated a volume of her poetry to his memory, described the Englishman's outlook: "Culture,—the sentiment for beauty, the passion for perfection, [to quote Arnold] 'the acquaintance with the best that has been thought and said in the world,'—this he deemed the remedy for the unideaed frivolity of the barbarian, the arid, self-complacent dullness of the Philistine, the hopeless intellectual squalor of the populace."[34] Arnold clearly believed that culture was enhanced by a knowledge and understanding of the achievements of the past, particularly those of classical Greece. He maintained that culture could raise the raw, natural man to the higher standards expressed in the Bible and in some pagan religions.

Arnold's name would have been familiar to Coates—if not from the popular press, then from his student years at Haverford, where he was assigned texts for his classical studies written by Arnold's father, Thomas (1795–1842).[35] When Matthew Arnold visited Philadelphia in December 1883, he stayed in the Coateses' home and was lavishly entertained by them one evening following a public lecture.[36] The excess of this social occasion suggests that the Coateses inhabited a very different part of Philadelphia than Eakins. One newspaper account described the setting for the dinner, which was attended by such eminent figures as Andrew Carnegie:

> The table was in the form of a circle. The guests sat at the outer edge. In the centre of the large open space within the table stood a fir tree laden with cones, with quails cunningly half-concealed within its branches. A mass of acacias, sunflowers and poppies extended from the inner edge of the table to the floor, and then rose by steps to the tree, around which there was a dense bed of beautiful ferns and exotic plants. . . . [T]he illumination, soft and brilliant, was derived altogether from wax candles, tempered by many colored shades, set in bronze candelabra, arranged at intervals around the table. . . . The board was further adorned with beautiful bouquets of rare cut flowers, choice roses and delicate lilies. . . . The entire room was trimmed in evergreen.[37]

In his remarks concluding this sumptuous evening, Arnold acknowledged his warm and informed reception in America: "Since I came to this country I have been treated with the greatest kindness, and I have found a familiarity with my works and doctrines which astonished me, and will remain for me, long as I live, a perpetual source of encouragement and enjoyment."[38]

Not all Americans, however, shared the Coateses' enthusiasm for Arnold. A notable negative reaction came from Walt Whitman, an acquaintance and model of Eakins' (see fig. 34), an advocate of the vigorous and the sensual, and a poet whose work, as Elizabeth Johns demonstrates in her essay, is often cited as a literary analogue to Eakins' *Swimming*. Whitman complained that Arnold hated to touch dirt and asserted: "But everything comes out of the dirt—everything; everything comes out of the people, the everyday people, the people as you find them and leave them."[39] The aesthetic expressed verbally by Whitman and visually by Eakins would have placed them at odds with Arnold and his American followers. The sensuality of Eakins' *Swimming*—and its seeming lack of "the sentiment for beauty"—may have made it less than acceptable to the Coateses.

When the nudity portrayed in Eakins' *Swimming* is placed in the context of the artist's work as a teacher, it becomes even more highly charged. The painting was on public exhibition at the very institution where Coates served as a leading administrator and Eakins as an increasingly controversial instructor. During the exhibition, we might have expected at least lively discussion over Eakins' choice and treatment of subject, the male nude, but instead, *Swimming* often went unmentioned in the press, or seemingly mundane aspects of the picture, such as its landscape background, were noted.[40] By contrast, in the same exhibition there was another ambitious painting of a similar subject—nude boys on a beach in France—by the academic expatriate American painter Alexander Harrison.[41] This picture excited much comment, mostly praise, despite the nudity of its figures, which,



FIG. 16. Thomas Eakins, *Spinning*, 1882–83, bronze relief, cast 1886, 20½ x 16½ x 3 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Edward H. Coates



FIG. 17. Thomas Eakins, *Knitting*, 1882–83, bronze relief, cast 1886, 20½ x 16½ x 3 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Edward H. Coates

as one writer put it, "violated the first law of art, namely propriety."[42] It was not necessarily public outrage over nudity, then, that discouraged Coates from acquiring *Swimming*, although the presentation of naked men well known to Eakins' audience was a far bolder step than Harrison's portrayal of rural French life.

On November 27, 1885, while *Swimming* was still on view at the academy, Coates wrote to Eakins expressing his "appreciation of the high qualities which it shows" and asking the painter to send him an invoice for the picture. Once that transaction was completed, Coates explained:

> I want to make a proposal which may be a surprise to you but which I take the liberty of making relying on our kindly relations and knowing that we may talk frankly. The suggestion is that if you are willing you should allow me to make an arrangement to take something of your work which you have on hand instead of the 'Swimming' picture. . . . My reasons for this I would probably express better in person than by note[.] I would say, however, briefly and *confidentially* that as you will recall one of my chief ideas was to have from you a picture which *might* some day become part of the Academy collection. The present canvas is to me admirable in many ways but I am inclined to believe that some of the pictures you have are even more representative, and it has been suggested would be perhaps more acceptable for the purpose which I have always had in view. You must not suppose from this that I depreciate the present work—such is not the case.[43]

By December 5 Coates had paid Eakins eight hundred dollars, which the artist eventually recorded as payment for his more conventional picture, *The Pathetic Song* of 1881 (pl. 4).[44] We thus know when Coates declined *Swimming*; how much he paid; and which painting he accepted in exchange. What we do *not* know is his motivation, described so guardedly as "reasons for this [that] would probably [be] express[ed] better in person."

We can surmise that, upon reflection, Coates may have deemed *Swimming* too controversial an acquisition, given his position of responsibility within the academy. In 1885 opposition to Eakins' teaching methods, particularly his anatomy instruction and his use of nude models, was already brewing among academy board members, instructors, anatomy demonstrators, and senior students. The final incident that resulted in Eakins' dismissal—his lifting of a loincloth from a male model in a women's life class—occurred about a month *after* Coates returned *Swimming*, but complaints about Eakins had long since been lodged. The painting could easily have been regarded as an aggressive statement of Eakins' teaching method, so much so that its purchase by Coates would have been read as his personal endorsement of Eakins' then-disputed academic program.

The painting that the Coateses chose instead of *Swimming* may also reflect Mrs. Coates' taste and interests. Not only had she studied music in her youth, but she sometimes sang her poetry to music.[45] The performer in Eakins' figure piece—Margaret Harrison—might be seen as a surrogate for Mrs. Coates, presenting her verses to assembled friends and admirers. Ironically, it was Margaret's brother, Alexander, whose well-regarded picture of male nudes had hung with Eakins' work in the 1885 academy annual. While less challenging painters and paintings found ready acceptance, Eakins remained an outsider.

He was soon to become more of an outsider. Coates, as chairman of the Committee on Instruction, requested Eakins' resignation in 1886, advising him with some delicacy that "a change in the management of the Schools is deemed necessary."[46] And it was Coates with whom Eakins corresponded about the criticisms of his teaching method in the months following his departure from the academy.[47] To the end, Eakins defended his approach as a teacher and an artist. "I have been fearfully traduced and I think even by you sometimes misunderstood," he complained to Coates. "I see no impropriety in looking at the most beautiful of Nature's works, the naked figure."[48] This was a difficult period for both men. Shortly after Thomas Hovenden was appointed Eakins' successor, the still-life painter George Cochran Lambdin, active at the academy and Coates' neighbor in Germantown, noted discord at the academy and concluded: "I am sure poor Mr. Coates has my sympathy, but he is in a worse position than he was with Eakins."[49]

While the relationship between Eakins and Coates had difficult moments, there is some evidence that the patron continued to respect and support the artist even after his resignation from the Pennsylvania Academy. When another of Eakins' patrons, James Scott, expressed displeasure with his decorative sculptures *Spinning* (fig. 16) and *Knitting* (fig. 17), Coates purchased them from Scott and, in 1887, presented them to the academy.[50] In his public address in 1890, Coates included Eakins in a short list of art teachers, anatomy instructors, and patrons he deemed responsible for the academy's success as a teaching institution.[51] Nevertheless, neither *Swimming* nor *The Pathetic Song* ever entered the academy's collection as Coates had originally intended. In fact, *Swimming* remained in the artist's possession until his death, its great promise for recognition unfulfilled, its subject a reminder of perhaps the darkest moment of Eakins' artistic career.

NOTES

I began research on this essay during my tenure as curator of paintings and sculpture at the Amon Carter Museum. It was first presented as a paper in an open session at the annual meeting of the College Art Association, Seattle, in February 1993. I am grateful to Sarah Blake McHam, Rutgers University, and Betsy Rosasco, Princeton University Art Gallery, session co-chairs, for their encouragement and advice. I am indebted to Andrew Walker, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, and Thayer Tolles, formerly a curatorial assistant at the Amon Carter Museum and now assistant curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for their research support. Sherman Clarke, former assistant librarian at the Amon Carter, provided innumerable obscure references through interlibrary loan.

1. Thomas Eakins' account book refers to work on the painting from July 31, 1884, to August 31, 1885 (collection of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel W. Dietrich II). Thomas Anshutz to John Wallace, August 25, 1884 (often cited as Wallace Collection, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, but not in that collection), says, "Eakins is painting a picture for Mr. Coates of a party of boys in swimming"; quoted in Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press for the National Gallery of Art, 1982), 1:239, 332 n. 239, 3ff.

2. For general biographical information on Coates, see *Biographical Catalog of the Matriculates of Haverford College Together with Lists of the Members of the College Faculty and the Managers, Officers and Recipients of Honorary Degrees* (Philadelphia: printed for the Alumni Association, 1922), p. 115; *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography Being the History of the United States* (New York: James T. White & Company, 1926), 19:326.

For genealogical information on Coates and his family, see Henry T. Coates, *Thomas Coates Who Removed from England to the Province of Pennsylvania, 1683, Compiled from Old Records* (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1897); "The Coates Family," The Warren S. and Josephine I. Ely Memorial Collection, The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, typescript, pp. 11–13; and Mary Coates, *Family Memorials and Recollections; or, Aunt Mary's Patchwork* (Philadelphia: printed for the family only, 1885).

3. I am grateful to Diana Franzusoff Peterson, Quaker Collection/Special Collections manuscripts cataloguer, Haverford College, for providing detailed information on Coates' education. For information on Coates' college studies see *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Haverford College, for the Academical Year, 1860–61* (Philadelphia: Haverford College, 1860); *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Haverford College, for the Academical Year, 1861–62* (Philadelphia: Haverford College, 1861); *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Haverford College, for the Academical Year, 1862–63* (Philadelphia: Haverford College, 1862); *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Haverford College, for the Academical Year, 1863–64* (Philadelphia: Haverford College, 1863); and *Report of the Managers of Haverford College. Fifth Month, 9th, 1864* (Philadelphia: Haverford College, 1864).

4. Coates began his business career at Gardner, Brewer & Company, later became a member of Claghorn, Herring & Company, cotton merchants, and eventually founded his own firm, Edward H. Coates & Company. He held financial interests in the Pennsylvania Company for Insurance on Lives and Granting Annuities, the Insurance Company of North America, and the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society (*The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 19: 326).

5. John Walsh, president, and Frederick Finley, treasurer, "The Centennial Board of Finance, a Corporation Created by an Act of Congress, Approved June 1st A.D. 1872" (Society Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia).

6. For the most incisive summary of Mrs. Coates' life and an evaluation of her literary career, see Robert H. Walker, "Coates, Florence Van Leer Nicholson," in Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James, and Paul S. Boyer, eds. *Notable American Women, 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1971), 1:353–354. See also *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White & Company, 1922), 18:307; "Mrs. Florence E. Coates," (Philadelphia) *Public Ledger*, April 8, 1927; Katherine Bregy, "Poems of Florence Earle Coates Widely Acclaimed," (Philadelphia) *Public Ledger*, April 29, 1917, magazine section, p. 7; "Poetry of Florence Earle Coates," (Philadelphia) *Public Ledger*, *Woman's Interests: The Woman's Section of the Public Ledger*, May 11, 1913, p. 1; "Florence E. Coates, Noted Poet, Dead," *New York Times*, April 8, 1927; J. L. H., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, 1930), 2:237–238.

7. Richards was a longtime friend and the beneficiary of Coates' patronage from 1875 to 1905 (see the William Trost Richards Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [hereafter AAA], roll 2296). The breadth of the Coateses' social and intellectual circle is suggested by their leadership of the Contemporary Club, a group founded in January 1887 to foster debate of issues of interest to modern society. Their fellow club members included not only Williams, Mitchell, and Traubel, but also Walt Whitman, the artist Emily Sartain, and the anatomy instructor W. W. Keen. See *The Contemporary Club 1887–88* (pamphlet, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania) and *The Contemporary Club, Philadelphia: Constitution, List of Members, Historical Review, Officers and Meetings. Eighteenth Season, 1903–1904* (Philadelphia, 1904).

8. For information on Coates as a collector, see *The Edward H. Coates Memorial Collection Presented by Mrs. Coates to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia: Penn-

sylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1923); William Trost Richards Papers, AAA, Smithsonian Institution, roll 2296.

9. The correspondence between Coates and William Trost Richards is in the William Trost Richards Papers, AAA, roll 2296.

10. See Doreen Bolger Burke and Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, "The Hudson River School in Eclipse," in John K. Howat et al., *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1987), pp. 71–90.

11. For a published statement on Coates' attitudes toward art and art education, see Edward H. Coates, *The Academy of the Fine Arts and Its Future: Address Delivered Before the Art Club of Philadelphia by Edward H. Coates: January 24th, 1890* (Philadelphia, 1890), p. 4.

12. "Extract from Minutes of May 31, 1906," Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (hereafter PAFA) archives, and "E. H. C.," n.d., PAFA archives.

13. Coates to Richards, May 22, 1891, William Trost Richards Papers, AAA, roll 2296.

14. For a discussion of Eakins' friendship with Rogers, see Kathleen Foster, "Locomotion: The Fairman Rogers Four-in-Hand," chap. 15 of her forthcoming *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

15. Coates to Eakins, November 27, 1885 (Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA).

16. See Gordon Hendricks, *Eadweard Muybridge: The Man Who Invented the Moving Picture* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1975); Anita Ventura Mozley, introduction to *Muybridge's Complete Human and Animal Locomotion: All 781 Plates from the 1887 Animal Locomotion by Eadweard Muybridge* (New York: Dover Publication, 1979); M. J. McCosker, "Philadelphia and the Genesis of the Motion Picture," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 65 (October 1941): 401–419; George E. Nitzsche, "The Muybridge Moving Picture Experiments at the University of Pennsylvania," *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (University of Pennsylvania) 31 (April 1929): 323–332; L. F. Rondinella, "More About Muybridge's Work," *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle* 31 (July 1929): 489–493; George E. Nitzsche, "The Evolution of Moving Pictures: Early Experiments Made by Muybridge at the University of Pennsylvania," *Old Penn: Weekly Review of the University of Pennsylvania* 11 (April 19, 1913): 933–939.

17. Mozley, introduction to *Muybridge's Human and Animal Locomotion*, p. xxvi.

18. Eadweard Muybridge, "The Attitudes of Animals in Motion," *The Journal of the Franklin Institute Devoted to Science and the Mechanic Arts, Published by the Institute, Under the Direction of the Committee on Publication* 85 (April 1883): 260.

19. Coates to William Pepper, provost of the University of Pennsylvania, September 27, 1886 (Dr. William Pepper Manuscripts, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania). In his letter Coates itemizes the about-to-be-published Muybridge plates as follows: 562 figures; about 100 horses; and 120 various animals, for a total of 782. There was one less plate, for a total of 781, in the published volume (Rondinella, "More About Muybridge's Work," p. 493), so it seems unlikely that many of the questionable photographs were excluded.

20. For a thorough discussion of this series of photographs and their significance, see Elwood C. Parry III, "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered: Another Look at the Standing Nude Photographs Made for the Use of Eakins's Students," *American Art Journal* 20, no. 2 (1988): 53–77.

21. Bennard B. Perlman noted that Robert Henri, a student at the academy in 1886, must have owned eight contact prints from various groups in the Naked series, which were pasted into his scrapbook (Parry, "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered," p. 55).

22. See Thomas Eakins, *Nine Figure Studies After the Standing Nude of Male and Female Models*, c. 1883, pen and ink and pencil on lined paper, 3⅞ x 9 in., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., illustrated in Parry, "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered," pp. 72–73.

23. The label is illustrated and analyzed in Parry, "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered," pp. 74–75.

24. Ibid., p. 75.

25. Jesse Godley is identified by the Philadelphia Museum of Art as the figure in the top panel of figure 14, but Sarah Cash disputes this identification; see n. 49 of her essay.

26. Coates, *The Academy of the Fine Arts and Its Future*, p. 12.

27. Ibid., pp. 7–8, 4, 17.

28. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 19:326.

29. The Williamses were also members of the Contemporary Club, for example. See *The Contemporary Club, Philadelphia: Constitution, List of Members, Historical Review, Officers and Meetings. Eighteenth Season, 1903–1904.*

30. One modern biographer has described the decline of her reputation: "Critics classified Mrs. Coates as a classic poet in the Victorian manner, aloof from the newer fashions, unafraid of sentiment and didacticism. . . . From a modern viewpoint her attitudes seem naive and optimistic, her prosody quaint" (Walker, "Coates, Florence," p. 353).

31. Florence Earle Coates, *Poems*, 2 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, Riverside Press, 1916), 1:93.

32. For biographical information, see *The Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (1917; reprint, London: Oxford University Press, 1973), supplement, 22:75.

33. See Warren D. Anderson, *Matthew Arnold and the Classical Tradition* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965).

34. Florence Earle Coates, "Matthew Arnold," *Century Magazine* 47 (April 1894): 933.

35. *Catalogue of Haverford College, for the Academical Year, 1860–61*, p. 10; *Catalogue of Haverford College, for the Academical Year, 1861–62*, p. 9; and *Report of the Managers of Haverford College*, pp. 12–13. See Sir Joshua Fitch, *Thomas and Matthew Arnold and Their Influence on English Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899); and Fred G. Walcott, *The Origins of Culture and Anarchy: Matthew Arnold and Higher Education in England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

36. For a modern account of Arnold's visits to the United States see Chilson Hathaway Leonard, "Arnold in America: A Study of Matthew Arnold's Literary Relations with America and of His Visits to This Country in 1883 and 1886" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1932). Arnold describes his own experiences and impressions in *Letters of Matthew Arnold, 1848–1888, Collected and Arranged by George W. E. Russell*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1895), 1:245–249.

37. "A Dinner to Arnold: Mr. and Mrs. Coates Entertain the English Philosopher," *Philadelphia Press*, December 28, 1883.

38. Ibid.

39. Quoted in John Henry Raleigh, *Matthew Arnold and American Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), p. 61.

40. For example, on November 7, a writer for the Philadelphia *American* concluded a review of the academy exhibition by observing of Eakins: "In nothing that he has done . . . has his work been so persistently and inexcusably bad as in the landscapes which he has introduced as backgrounds" ("Art. The Awards of Prizes at the Academy," Philadelphia *American*, November 7, 1885; PAFA scrapbook, 1877–92, AAA, roll P53).

41. Harrison's painting was destroyed by fire in 1886, while it was still on loan to the Pennsylvania Academy. For biographical and bibliographical information on Harrison, see Charles Francis Browne, "Alexander Harrison—Painter," *Brush and Pencil* 4 (June 1899): 132–144.

42. "The Exhibition: Important Pictures and Late Arrivals Worthy of Notice," (Philadelphia) *Inquirer*, November 3, 1885 (PAFA Scrapbook, 1877–92, AAA, roll P53).

43. Coates to Eakins, November 27, 1885.

44. On December 5, shortly before the close of the academy exhibition, Eakins recorded the transaction in his account book (Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:332 n. 239:3 ff.).

45. Walker, "Coates, Florence," p. 353.

46. Coates to Eakins, February 8, 1886 (quoted in Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:286).

47. For an account of these events see Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, "'Trouble' at the Pennsylvania Academy," in *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989), pp. 69–79.

48. Eakins to Coates, September 11, 1886 (Bregler Collection, PAFA, and Foster and Leibold, "Writing About Eakins," p. 157, no. 169, and pp. 235–238).

49. George Cochran Lambdin to William Trost Richards, September 21, 1886 (William Trost Richards Papers, AAA, roll 2296).

50. Richard J. Boyle et al., *In This Academy* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1976), p. 302.

51. Coates, *The Academy of the Fine Arts and Its Future*, p. 10.

Sarah Cash

"Friendly and Unfriendly": The Swimmers of Dove Lake

> As I haltingly ramble an hour or two this afternoon by the more secluded parts of the shore, or sit under an old cedar half way up the hill, the city near in view, many young parties gather to bathe or swim, squads of boys, generally twos or threes, some larger ones, along the sand-bottom, or off an old pier close by. A peculiar and pretty carnival—at its height a hundred lads or young men, very democratic, all decent behaving. The laughter, voices, calls, responses—the springing and diving of the bathers from the great string-piece of the decay'd pier, where climb or stand long ranks of them, naked, rose-color'd, with movements, postures ahead of any sculpture. To all this, the sun, so bright, the dark-green shadow of the hills the other side, the amber-rolling waves, changing as the tide comes in to a transparent tea-color—the frequent splash of the playful boys, sousing—the glittering drops sparkling, and the good western breeze blowing.
>
> —*Walt Whitman, "Hot Weather New York," August 10, 1881*

Thomas Eakins' *Swimming* has been noted often for its affinities to Walt Whitman's writings, such as this passage—describing the poet's experience along New York's Harlem River—and the oft-quoted "Song of Myself."[1] James Whitcomb Riley's popular 1882 poem, "The Old Swimmin'-Hole," may also be seen as a literary analogue to the painting. *Swimming*'s even more specific connections with actual people and places reveal much about the artist's activities and relationships in 1885, when he completed it. The painting is representative of Eakins' most incisive work, at once thoroughly contemporary and intensely personal in its subject and associations.

The setting of *Swimming* is very important to its meaning. By carefully choosing Dove Lake in Bryn Mawr[2]—several miles west of Philadelphia—as the site, Eakins selected a new and modern recreational spot that was also rich in history, the vestiges of which were still evident. Its associations can be traced back to colonial times and forward to Edward Coates, Eakins' patron. Dove Lake is located about three miles northeast of the Bryn Mawr train station, where Eakins and his students disembarked from the Pennsylvania Railroad in the summer of 1884 on the expedition that produced the photographs associated with *Swimming*. The lake is situated along picturesque Mill Creek, which flows into the Schuylkill River at Gladwyne and is noted for its many pre-Revolutionary mill sites. Dove Mill, for which Dove Lake is named, was built in 1748 and had seen various uses in its long history. First it was a grist and fulling mill and later became one of the first paper mills in the colonies.[3] The mill produced paper for the Continental currency, at one time under Benjamin Franklin's supervision, as well as government documents for the capital in Philadelphia, including an 1817 reprinting of the Declaration of Independence.[4] If Eakins knew the history of Dove Lake, he may have been intrigued by the fact that Philadelphia's great statesman played a role in the history of the mill. He may also have known that Franklin was a lifelong swimmer and one of the best-known writers on the pastime.[5] Eakins and Whitman were also avid swimmers, and Eakins an inventive diver.[6]

In the 1880s Bryn Mawr enjoyed growing popularity as a weekend and vacation retreat for wealthy Philadelphians in need of respite from urban life; many city dwellers stayed at the grand Bryn Mawr Hotel, a short walk from the train station and picturesque vistas of Mill Creek. Eager buyers



FIG. 18. William E. Winner, *View of the Dove Mills*, 1872, oil on canvas, 22 x 29 in., Gladwyne Free Library

snapped up tracts of land along the creek, appreciating the area for its natural beauty and historic significance. Painters, photographers, and sportsmen also enjoyed visiting such sites.[7] This was particularly true of the site depicted in *Swimming*, which had been irrevocably changed in 1873 when the meadow surrounding Dove Mill (fig. 18) was transformed into a recreational spot after the owner, Samuel Croft, dammed Mill Creek for the use of his nearby copper-rolling mill, creating Dove Lake.[8]

Soon afterward, amateur photographers like John Coates Browne began to record children and others enjoying outings at Dove Lake and other bucolic Mill Creek spots. Browne's 1878 view of a fishing outing on Dove Lake (fig. 19) shows the remains of a mill foundation, identified by its shaft and gear wheel, on the south side of the lake, across from the disintegrating Dove Mill, whose roof and windows appear to have been destroyed by fire, probably soon after 1870, the last date the building served as a mill.[9] In 1884 Eakins and his students gathered on and around the same foundation and were photographed from a vantage point close to Browne's.

Nothing conclusive is known of how Eakins first became aware of Dove Lake and its rich history. His links with the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, of which Browne was the informal historian and a founding member, are just one avenue through which he may have known images depicting Dove Lake.[10] William E. Winner (c. 1815–1883), who painted the site in 1872 (see fig. 18), was actively exhibiting genre scenes and portraits in Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annuals in the late 1870s and early 1880s.[11] It is possible that Edward Coates knew about the fashionable area and the nearby lake through social connections, and he may have suggested the site to Eakins.[12]

Whatever the circumstances surrounding the choice of site, by the time Eakins and his students visited Dove Lake in the summer of 1884, the spot's industrial past had become even more obscured. Dove Mill, seen in one of the photographs preparatory to *Swimming* (fig. 20), was even more dilapidated, the stone foundation across the lake had further decayed, and the vestiges of the shaft and gear wheel the foundation had supported in 1878 had been dismantled.[13] The nostalgia evoked by the ruins around the lake recalls some of Eakins' works with overtly historical references, such as *Arcadia* (pl. 11), *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* (pl. 7), *Spinning* (see fig. 16), and *Knitting* (see fig. 17). Moreover, Eakins himself reinforces the sense of retrospection. As the observer at the lower right of the painting, he surveys in his students his many accomplishments at the academy at this pivotal moment in his career.

Eakins' relationship with the site changed dramatically within a year of the painting's completion. Both Edward Hornor Coates and his brother, George Morrison Coates, had purchased property a stone's throw from Dove

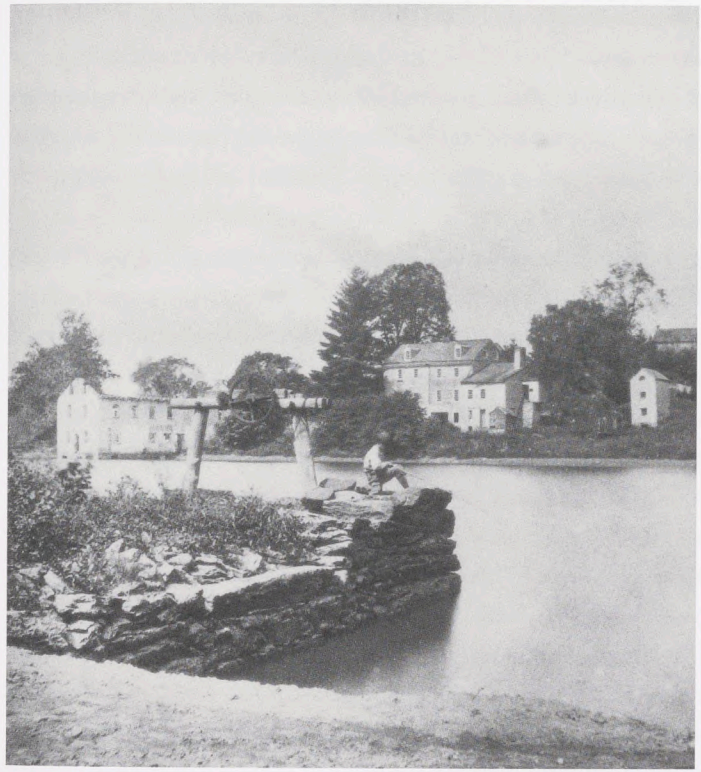


FIG. 19. John Coates Browne, detail of *Mill Creek 1878*, page in album of abumen silver prints, 1878–79, The Library Company of Philadelphia



FIG. 20. Thomas Eakins or Circle of Eakins, *Eakins' Students at the Site for "Swimming,"* c. 1884, albumen print, 3 13/16 x 4 11/16 in., The Art Museum, Princeton University, Museum purchase, bequest of Mrs. John E. Long in memory of John E. Long

Lake by the fall of 1886. George's purchase of a tract very near the lake—from James Raymond Claghorn, son of Eakins' friend and Pennsylvania Academy president James L. Claghorn—occurred in November 1885, while *Swimming* was first on view at the academy annual.[14] The land purchase probably resulted in some way from the Coates family's knowledge of the painting's site; the transaction may even have been discussed while or as a result of Coates' decision to reject the painting in October 1885. In October 1886 Edward Coates himself purchased a prime tract of land adjacent to that surrounding Dove Lake.[15]

Even more than the setting, the figures depicted in *Swimming* and their relationships to each other are crucial to the painting's significance. Eakins titled the painting *Swimming* when he showed it at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual. The choice of title clearly specifies the act of swimming as the painting's primary subject and draws attention to the

group of naked men engaged in that activity. Like many other forms of exercise, swimming for health, leisure, and sport had gained enormous popularity during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[16] As for the swimmers, Eakins portrayed them, including himself, as recognizable Philadelphians, relaxing together at nearby Dove Lake. When Eakins presented the painting publicly in 1885, the five men he depicted as his swimming companions were his friends and supporters, and each held a specific importance to him; all but one were at the time or previously had been his students at the academy. An investigation of the lives of these individuals and their particular relationships with each other and with Eakins suggests that he chose them—as well as their poses and their precise positions in the painting—because they represented particular issues current in his life when he created the painting. As if to underscore his intentional selection of specific models for *Swimming*, as well as the importance to him of each, he exhibited individual portraits of two of these men, identified by name, alongside the painting at the academy annual.

One prescient critic who viewed *Swimming* wrote that this "important work" by Eakins would "excite abundant criticism, both friendly and unfriendly."[17] Appropriately enough, "friendly and unfriendly" would also describe Eakins' associations with each of the models in the year after the painting's completion, when so much happened to change his relationships with his friends, students, and supporters. The exhibition of *Swimming* occurred on the eve of troubled times at the academy; within a year, Eakins would be dismissed as the director of its school, and his group of supporters would change character drastically. Some of those depicted in the painting remained his friends, protested his discharge, and bolstered his later endeavors; some turned bitterly against him and contributed to his downfall; still others moved far away or otherwise dropped out of the artist's life. Perhaps not insignificantly, when the artist showed the painting in 1886 in Louisville, Kentucky, he changed its title from *Swimming* to *Swimmers*, a shift in emphasis that suggests he no longer considered the subject to be a collective pastime shared by a closely knit community of friends, but rather six discrete personalities who happened to be linked by their common activity. Just as some of the models were no longer part of Eakins' life by 1886, he could not figuratively return to the site depicted in the painting with any comfort.

Although Eakins himself never specified in writing the models depicted in the painting, they may be identified from statements by those closely associated with the artist, and from a careful examination of portraits of his students and friends. Not only were the identities of two of the models evident from their portraits hanging nearby at the 1885 annual, but the other men depicted in *Swimming* would have been recognizable to informed visitors to the academy; all were deeply involved with Eakins' work there. Therefore, while *Swimming* was far from the target of "abundant criticism" in the press—only five critics paid it even passing attention—it undoubtedly elicited substantial discussion among visitors to the academy owing to its identifiable models and site and, undoubtedly, because of its precise and realistic treatment of the nude.[18]

Over the years there has been some dispute over the identities of the models in *Swimming*.[19] This is hardly surprising. Eakins and his wife, Susan Macdowell Eakins, left no written documentation about the painting's subject. That *Swimming* remained out of public view from 1887 until 1917, after the artist's death, further suppressed discussion of the work by friends and students who could have commented knowledgeably on its contents. Scholars, most important of whom was Lloyd Goodrich, did not delve into the identities of the models when some of the men were still alive. Finally, the very composition of the painting discourages the certain identification of its models: none of the figures, even the familiar Eakins, is shown frontally and in full light. It is as though the artist is tantalizing us with a puzzle that we can never quite solve.

The identifications proposed here and my examination of the importance of the various models to Eakins will be based on the assumption that he rendered them from life in 1885 during the final stages of preparing the finished painting. This is supported by Eakins' exacting working method for the painting and his choice of only a few, specific models for the finished work—unlike his swimming, boxing, and wrestling photographs, generally peopled with many more men—and the fact that he first recorded his expenses for painting *Swimming*'s models on January 31, 1885.[20] Most of the names presented here are based on the earliest known identification of the models by Eakins' student and friend, Charles Bregler (1864–1958), who would have known some, if not all, of the men depicted.[21] Bregler identified four figures and the dog depicted in *Swimming*: Eakins and his setter, Harry, swimming at the lower right; Benjamin Fox rising from the water; Jesse Godley standing on the ruins of a mill foundation; and George Reynolds diving. In another context Bregler accepted the identification of the seated, reaching man as J. Laurie Wallace,[22] and Wallace himself later confirmed that he had modeled for *Swimming*.[23] Bregler never suggested the name of the reclining figure at the left.[24]

Bregler's identifications bear reconsideration here. Only the naming of the redhead as Benjamin Fox cannot be confirmed visually, since no portraits or descriptions of Fox's appearance are known; in 1885 he would have been about twenty.[25] In 1974 Gordon Hendricks identified Eakins' student Arthur Burdett Frost (1851–1928) as the model, but undoubtedly did so because the redheaded Frost, unlike Fox, became a well-known artist and was the subject of at least two known portraits by Eakins. For several reasons, not the least of which is its inclusion with Hendricks' erroneous naming of the reclining figure as Jesse Godley and the standing figure as J. Laurie Wallace, this identification may be dismissed.[26]

The other identifications made by Bregler are well supported by visual and documentary evidence. It is indeed Eakins who appears in the water at



FIG. 21. Frederick Gutekunst, *Jesse Godley*, c. 1883–86, albumen print (cabinet card), 5 11/16 x 4 3/16 in., Collection of Emeline Driscoll

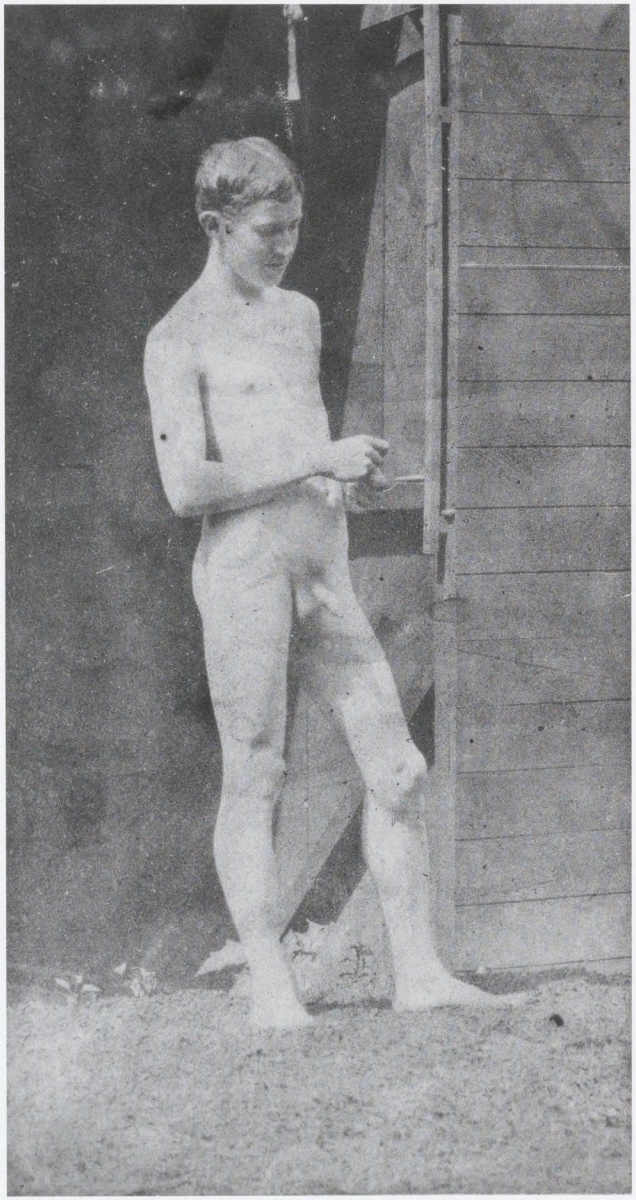


FIG. 22. Thomas Eakins, *George Frank Stephens or Jesse Godley nude, in University of Pennsylvania photography shed*, 1885, albumen print, 9⅞ x 5⅝ in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.498



FIG. 23. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins and Students, Swimming Nude*, c. 1883 or 1884, platinum print, 8 15/16 x 11 1/16 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.480

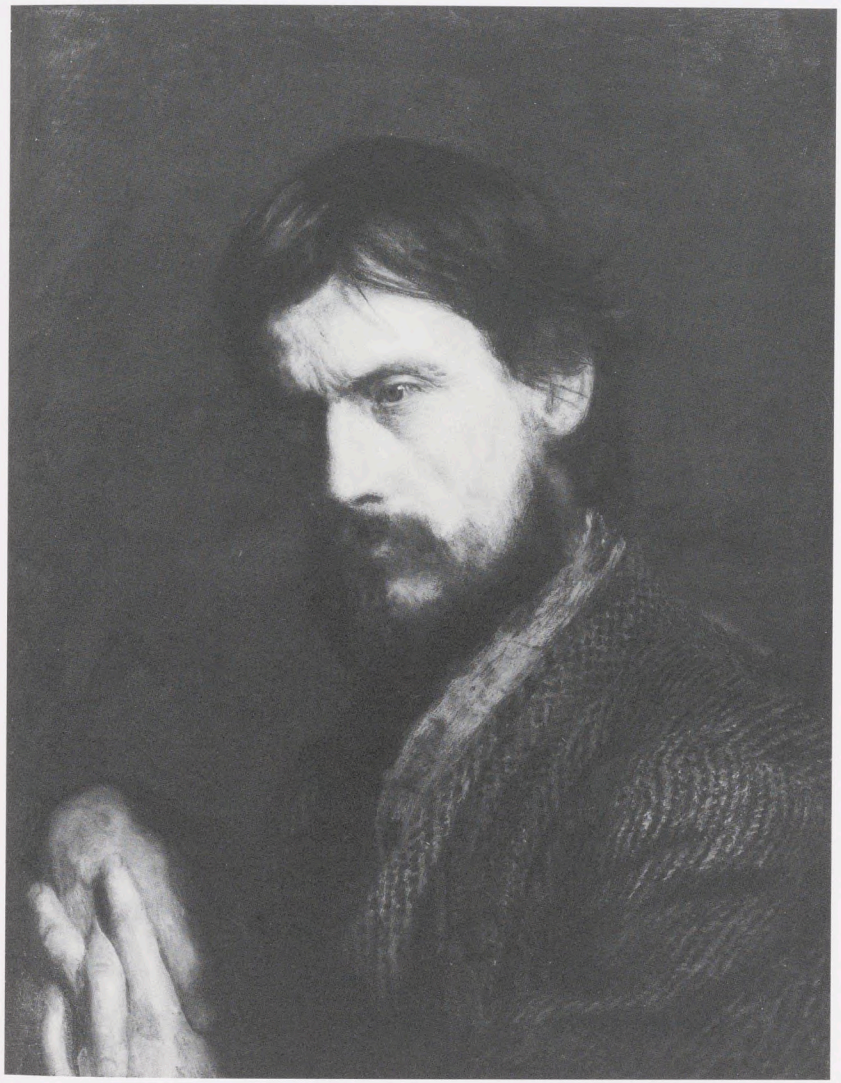


FIG. 24. Thomas Eakins, *The Veteran*, 1884–85, oil on canvas, 22¼ x 15 in., Yale University Art Gallery, bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903

the lower right; as the only one swimming, separate from the rest of the figures, his self-portrait further emphasizes the painting's personal meaning to the artist. Despite his choice of these swimmers for their importance to his life and career, Eakins' isolation and his status as the observer suggest he is in command of the others and their actions. Unlike the men he watches, Eakins achieved greatness in his career; moreover, he would soon be singled out, albeit by rejection, for the independent views that set him apart from his contemporaries.

Jesse Godley, standing, watches the diver. His square shoulders, short, straight hair, and distinctive protruding ears are evident in photographs made of Godley while he was an academy student (figs. 21, 73). A photograph of a naked youth (fig. 22), tentatively identified as Godley based on facial similarities with his two portraits, reveals a youthful physique in a stance not unlike the one seen in *Swimming*.[27] Godley, the only documented student participant in the swimming photographs, is probably the standing figure in the most closely photographed among them (fig. 23), his position and pose foretelling his prominence in the finished painting.[28] Godley was also the principal figure in the "Swimming relief" recorded in Eakins' expense journal; Eakins apparently recalled this relief in his undated letter of about March 10, 1886, to Coates: "You probably know that for months last year I was modelling young Godley after the Greek methods of relief not on any order or hope of reward but merely to study & gain knowledge & strength."[29]

The recent treatment of *Swimming* revealed the face of the diving figure, albeit in shadow, far more clearly than it was before, and his gaunt, bearded face compares favorably to known images of the Civil War veteran George Reynolds. Eakins painted Reynolds as *The Veteran* (fig. 24) in 1884–85, while working on *Swimming*. This was undoubtedly the same portrait of Reynolds he exhibited at the academy annual in 1885.[30] The diver's body, which appears leaner and more aged than those of the other swim-

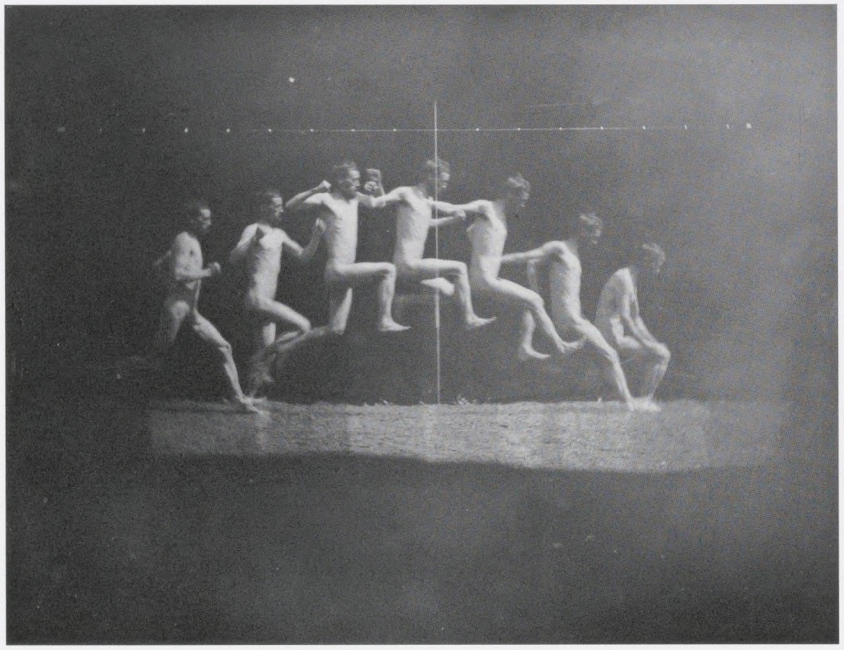


FIG. 25. Thomas Eakins, *Motion study: George Reynolds nude, running jump to right*, 1885, copy negative from a dry plate negative, 3 ⅝ x 4 ¾ in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.988

mers, corresponds to Reynolds' own as it is seen in one of Eakins' photographic motion studies (fig. 25).[31] Reynolds was older than Eakins' other students—at forty-six, five years Eakins' senior—at the time *Swimming* was completed. His muster records reveal that he was a slight man, five feet six inches in height, with brown hair, gray eyes, and a fair complexion.[32]

The seated, reaching figure's curly black hair and dark-skinned, triangular face, distinguished by a mustache and beard, affirm that he is J. Laurie Wallace. His distinctive appearance (fig. 26) was documented by Eakins sev-



FIG. 26. Lear and Cotton, *Portrait Photo of J. Laurie Wallace as a Young Man*, c. 1890, albumen print, 6½ x 4¼ in., Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, gift of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph I. Barker in memory of George Barker

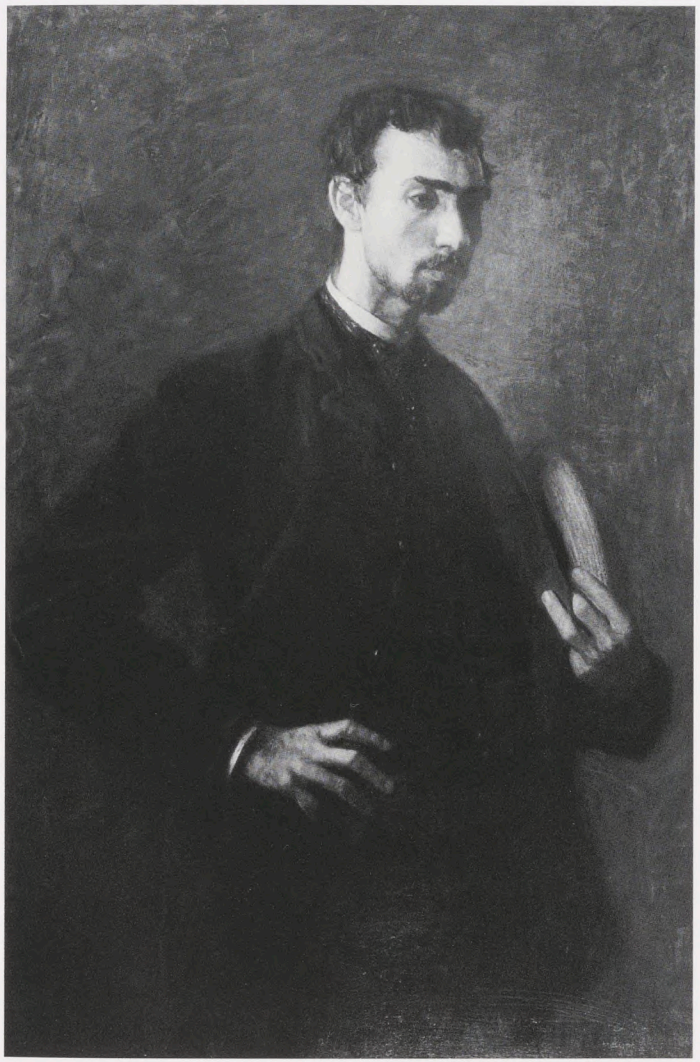


FIG. 27. Thomas Eakins, *Professor John Laurie Wallace*, 1885, oil on canvas on panel, 50¼ x 32½ in., Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, gift of the James A. Douglas Memorial Foundation, 1971, 1941.24

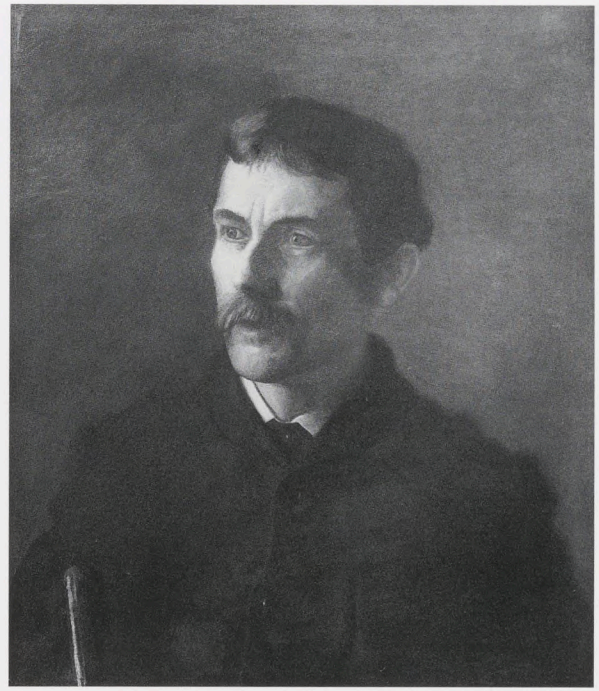


FIG. 28. Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Talcott Williams*, c. 1889, oil on canvas, 24½ x 20 in., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, gift of the Kate and Laurens Seelye Family and the Smithson Society, and Gallery purchase

eral times, notably in his portrait of Wallace as a professor (fig. 27), which hung, like *The Veteran*, next to *Swimming* in the academy annual. The academy student Adam Emory Albright described Wallace as being slightly exotic: "He looked the part of an artist, long curly black hair and full beard. We never knew his nationality, he was dark with black eyes and a mannered speech."[33] Eakins seems to have favored Wallace as a model, and he appears in numerous paintings, reliefs, and photographs. Wallace left the academy and Philadelphia in late 1883 to travel in the West. He returned briefly to



FIG. 29. Thomas Eakins, *Talcott Williams*, c. 1886–92, platinum print, 8 x 6⅜ in., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, transferred from Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Archives, 1983, HMSG 83.79

Philadelphia in 1885 before relocating to Chicago to begin teaching at the Art Institute there. Eakins depicted him as the figure playing the zither in *Professionals at Rehearsal* (pl. 6), which, like *Swimming*, was painted during Wallace's brief return to Philadelphia;[34] in a small waist-length naked study (see fig. 9); in *The Crucifixion* (pl. 5) and a study for same (1880, Philadelphia Museum of Art); as the standing youth in *Arcadia* (pl. 11) and the piper in the relief of the same subject (see fig. 3). He also appears naked in many photographs made by Eakins and his collaborators, including those used by the artist in preparing *Arcadia* (see fig. 5) and in the Naked series (see fig. 14).[35]

Unnamed by Bregler or any other author, the reclining figure at the left is almost certainly Eakins' friend Talcott Williams, a well-known journalist and prominent figure in Philadelphia society. Williams enjoyed visiting the Pennsylvania Academy and occasionally introduced himself to artists there; he may have met Eakins that way. The two had met by 1881 and saw each other often.[36] The figure's hairline is identical to that of Williams seen in Eakins' painted and photographed portraits of him (figs. 28, 29). Rising from short sideburns, it curves inward at the temple before receding slightly at the corners of the forehead. The wisps of hair along the top of the forehead, particularly in the center, also recall Williams' features, as do the strong jaw, prominent nose and ears, dark, bushy eyebrows, and thick walrus mustache (for which he was well known). Eakins was clearly fascinated with Williams' distinctive face, making a life mask from it (fig. 30).[37] Williams would have been thirty-six in 1885, an age that corresponds to the mature frame of the reclining man.

Although Eakins is the only one swimming, Williams, with his relaxed, self-assured pose, provides the visual and literal counterpoint to the artist without challenging the latter's role. Their bodies form stable, horizontal elements bracketing the circle (around the dog, Harry) formed by the four students and their connecting reflections. Their placement in the composi-



FIG. 30. Thomas Eakins and Samuel Murray, *Life Mask of Talcott Williams*, 1889, plaster, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, gift of the Estate of Talcott Williams, class of 1893 (transfer from Frost Library)

tion and their knowing gazes suggest the critical roles played by the two well-established Philadelphia professionals in shaping the careers of young disciples in their respective fields. They also held common interests. Williams shared Eakins' demonstrated curiosity about photography, particularly regarding the experiments of Eadweard Muybridge; he not only covered *Animal Locomotion* in the press but was himself involved with experimental photography.[38] Both men were also acquainted with Walt Whitman or his work by 1885.[39]

These associations remind us that in 1895 one of Eakins' male students reminisced to another about "us Whitman fellows."[40] There has been much discussion about Whitman's sexuality in recent years.[41] The connections of *Swimming*'s models to Whitman, like the frequently acknowledged affinities of its subject to the poet's writings, naturally elicit questions about the role of homosexuality in the painting and its models. This has been most recently addressed by Whitney Davis, who contends that "us Whitman fellows" had "coded meaning" by the 1880s. He mentions J. Laurie Wallace's "ambiguous sexuality" and states that Wallace "engaged in transparent evasions to avoid suspicion," recalling Gordon Hendricks' comparison of Wallace to Whitman: "Wallace never married. Like Walt Whitman he claimed to have a lover in far-off climes, where his statement could not be checked."[42] But for their marital status, however, virtually nothing concrete is known of the private realms or sexual propensities of any of the men depicted, with the exception of Eakins, whose personal life has been illuminated by the recent cataloguing of Charles Bregler's Collection at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Despite this, it cannot be assumed that Eakins was homosexual; he is perhaps better described, in Kathleen Foster's words, as "intensely sexualized," and his relationships with his students, as Elizabeth Johns has described them, "socio-sexual."[43]

The placement of Wallace, Godley, and Reynolds in the painting signifies their elevated status in the artist's life, as his supporters and favored students in 1885 and the years just preceding. With Fox, whose relationship with his teacher is less clear, they form Eakins' visual and literal inner circle, representing the core of his academy students.[44] Wallace, Godley, and Reynolds also held posts of authority at the academy. Wallace was the demonstrator of anatomy—student supervisor of the anatomy class—in 1882 and 1883; Godley served as demonstrator in the anatomy class in 1886, acting as student supervisor of the dissecting room; and Reynolds served as monitor of the school.[45] Wallace, whose student work (see fig. 77) Eakins marked with an "E," his highest accolade, was described by a classmate as a "star student . . . it was said he could set up the best figures on canvas of any one who had ever studied in the school. Eakins was very proud of him."[46] Eakins singled out Godley for his industriousness in the dissecting of

horses.[47] He arranged for Reynolds to attend academy life classes at no charge in 1883 and 1884 and approved of his work; one of his paintings (see fig. 75) hung in Eakins' studio for many years.[48] Eakins further favored the three by choosing them as subjects of numerous paintings and photographs, both traditional portraits and figure pieces (see, for example, figs. 22, 24, and 27 and pls. 5 and 6). Eakins also enlisted the participation of these admirers, who understood and supported his controversial schemes involving nudity, in his experimental Naked series of about 1883 and the motion photographs of 1884–85 (see figs. 14, 25).[49]

As if foretelling the future, the year after *Swimming* was completed, Wallace and Reynolds, who form the base of the inner group, would continue as Eakins' solid supporters. Wallace, who traveled to Chicago to teach and later settled in Omaha, remained Eakins' confidant through correspondence, and Eakins arranged to see him in 1887 when passing through Chicago.[50] Reynolds remained faithful to Eakins, leading the mass secession of students protesting Eakins' forced resignation in 1886.[51] He was instrumental in founding the breakaway Art Students' League, where Eakins taught many former academy students, and served as its first curator.[52] Echoing his stance in the painting, Godley would soon turn his back on his teacher. He joined Eakins' disgruntled brother-in-law Frank Stephens, Colin Campbell Cooper, Jr., and others to lead the ranks opposing Eakins.[53] Soon thereafter Godley joined forces with Stephens and Cooper in a business venture.

Fox's future as it involved Eakins is unclear; he returned to the academy in 1888 and thus did not follow Eakins and others to the Art Students' League. Otherwise little is known of his reaction to Eakins' dismissal. Before the painting's completion, Fox received none of the special commendations accorded his fellow students. His status as the one apparently the least "shaped" and favored by Eakins, as well as his impressionable youth, is indicated in *Swimming* by his awkwardly formed, anonymous appearance; the least fully realized figure in the painting, he is also the least dominant in its composition. Indeed, Eakins had great difficulty deciding how to pose and place Fox, finally achieving his twisting torso and obscured face. Eakins may have selected Fox as a student from whom he expected great accomplishments, but Fox was mentally unstable and his commitment to a lunatic asylum in 1892 cut his career short, whatever promise it may have held in 1885. Fox, as an outsider and a vulnerable loner, also may have appealed to Eakins' independent sensibilities when choosing the models for *Swimming*.

Fox forms a youthful bridge between the three oldest and most experienced figures, Williams, Reynolds, and Eakins. The visual link between Reynolds and Eakins—the diver's reflection connecting with Eakins' paddling hand—is also a significant one.[54] Reynolds, the veteran who, after challenging the rules laid down by his superiors, had become a war hero, must have held particular appeal for the renegade Eakins.[55] Reynolds' art, too, bears parallels to Eakins'; both men chose to record contemporary and historical views of their respective cities.

Ultimately, sparse surviving documentation does not allow construction of a tightly organized, programmatic interpretation of the way the site and models specifically contribute to the meaning of *Swimming*. However, a consideration of these particularities provides a richer understanding of the painting's significance for Eakins and his students, patron, and other contemporaries, both at the time of its first public display in 1885 and in the eventful years to follow. The strong connections of Eakins' choices to the Pennsylvania Academy clearly signify his awareness that the painting, commissioned with the understanding that it might someday enter the academy's collection, could henceforth represent his achievements as an artist and teacher at the institution that was then the focal point of all his endeavors.

NOTES

I am deeply grateful to Doreen Bolger for her generous assistance in shaping this essay and for her constant encouragement. Elizabeth Johns and Kathleen Foster kindly offered information, advice, and support, and readers Marc Simpson and Evan H. Turner contributed helpful criticism. Cheryl Leibold, archivist, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Mary Mendenhall Wood and Robert Swartz of the Lower Merion Historical Society, and Judith A. Meier of the Montgomery County Historical Society patiently answered numerous questions. Jennifer Hersh, Laurette E. McCarthy, Jerry Smolin, Robert Torchia, and Andrew Walker provided critical research assistance, and Amon Carter Museum librarians Milan Hughston and Sherman Clarke handled a multitude of requests with grace and speed.

1. Evan H. Turner was the first to draw the parallel between *Swimming* and "Song of Myself"; see his introduction to Theodor Siegl's *Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), p. 26.

2. At a lecture at the Amon Carter Museum on November 21, 1991, Elizabeth Johns proposed that *Swimming* depicts Dove Lake, along Mill Creek, based on two related facts. First, in his July 31, 1884, journal entry for the painting, Eakins recorded "Bryn Mawr & boat houses" as his destination with "Godley and brother" on their photographic outing; see "Journal of Thomas Eakins (Self), 1883–88" (collection of Daniel W. Dietrich II [hereafter 1883–88 journal]). Second, the painting depicts the same site seen in figure 19. See also her "Avowal of Artistic Community: Nudity and Fantasy in Thomas Eakins' Photographs," in Susan Danly and Cheryl Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994), p. 86 n. 48 and fig. 6. "Brother" must have referred to Jesse Godley's brother Walter (1869–1938). It is not known to what "boat houses" might refer; no boathouses are known to have existed on or near Mill Creek. (Several of those on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia had been built by the 1880s.) Whitney Davis states that the 1894 U.S.G.S. survey of the Norristown Quadrangle, Pennsylvania, shows that the "pond upstream from Dove Lake on Mill Creek seems to have possessed the 'boat houses' noted in Eakins' record of his excursion" ("Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 [September 1994]: 336 n. 26). However, the structures shown on the upstream pond are not distinguishable from any other structures on the survey and could just as easily be houses or mills. Today Dove Lake is the largest pond on Mill Creek; in the nineteenth century the sizable Mill Pond existed just to the southwest. See *Atlas of Bryn Mawr and Vicinity or of Properties Along the Pennsylvania Rail Road . . . from Official Records, Private Plans, and Actual Surveys* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1881), pp. 42–43, pl. 8.

3. Dove Mill was the familiar name given to Amies Mill because of Amies' watermark, a dove bearing an olive branch. No doubt Eakins would have found the slogan of Dove Mill uncannily resonant of the tightly knit group of mentors and students in *Swimming*: "The American Arts Only Want Encouragement." Also included in the mill's advertisements was the following poem, whose meaning seems to parallel Eakins' firmly held views on the importance of direct, unself-conscious artistic expression, while foretelling their imminent consequences: "Our antient [*sic*] Bird does still unchang'd remain. / And base DECEIVERS COUNTERFEIT in vain; / For quick the PUBLIC must the difference prove. / Between the IMPOSTOR and the GENUINE DOVE."

4. See "Franklin Had Scheme Aimed at Bogus Bills," (Ardmore, Pa.) *Main Line Times*, October 18, 1979.

5. See Louise Todd Ambler, *Benjamin Franklin: A Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 25–27, which cites Franklin's "Cautions to Learners, and Advice to Bathers," published posthumously as "Dr. Franklin's Treatise" in J. Frost, *The Art of Swimming* (New York: P. W. Gallaudet, 1818), pp. 51–64, and *Benjamin Franklin: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1987), pp. 328, 840–843, 885, 1351.

6. See Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 1982), 1:7. On Whitman, see Charles Sprawson, *Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), pp. 225–228.

7. I. Layton Register, the owner of Dove Lake and surrounding property during the years Eakins worked on *Swimming* (he had acquired the land from his father-in-law, Samuel Croft, in 1882 or 1883 [see Montgomery County Deed Book 277, pp. 315–320]), was very interested in the preservation of Dove Mill and surrounding buildings. Register was an amateur photographer who enjoyed "making photographs of picturesque and other interesting subjects" ("Ye Ole Grist Mill," *Ardmore Chronicle*, July 13, 1907, and "I. Layton Register Dies Suddenly," *Ardmore Chronicle*, October 4, 1913). Soon after Dove Lake was formed in 1873, it became a popular skating spot; see *Main Line Times*, January 29, 1981, p. 17.

8. Winner painted four views of the site. These paintings, all in the collection of the Gladwyne Free Library, Gladwyne, were commissioned by Croft. He inscribed the reverse of each painting, identifying the site depicted as Dove Mill: "These Four Views of My Property on Mill Creek, Known as the 'Dove Mills' were taken in October 1872 Prior to Building Croft's Dam." Croft's son-in-law, I. Layton Register, reproduced figure 18 as "The Old Dove Mill/Which stood on the Black Rocks Road, near Bryn Mawr, Pa" as part of a short history of the site in his "Historical Remarks," *Historical Sketches, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* 5 (1925): 152–154.

9. The only record of a building on the site of the rocky foundation is indicated in the *Atlas of Properties Along the Pennsylvania Railroad Embracing Each Side of the Road and from Overbrook to Malvern Station* (Philadelphia: J. L. Smith, 1887), pl. 10. I am grateful to Mary Mendenhall Wood of the Lower Merion Historical Society for pointing this out to me. On the fire, see Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Evarts and Peck, 1884), p. 612.

10. Eakins lectured at least once at the Photographic Society of Philadelphia (hereafter PSP), demonstrating his experiments in instantaneous photography to members in December 1883. The *Philadelphia Photographer* summarized his remarks shortly thereafter. See Robert McCracken Peck, "Thomas Eakins and Photography: The Means to an End," *Arts* 53 (May 1979): 116. Conversely, the academy reciprocated with the PSP, which sponsored events at the academy such as a lantern-slide evening held on April 12, 1883. See Danly and Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph*, p. 226. Fairman Rogers and John Sartain, Eakins' colleagues at the academy, were members of the PSP. No relationship between John Coates Browne and Edward Hornor Coates has been discovered.

11. See catalogues of the Pennsylvania Academy annuals for 1876, 1878, 1879, 1880, and 1881.

12. Contrary to Whitney Davis' suggestion that Eakins' patron had personal links to the Bryn Mawr area, the only documented link between Coates, a native of Philadelphia, and the Main Line was his attendance at Haverford; however, he graduated in the class of 1864, nine years before Dove Lake was formed. Likewise, he could not have "swum there as a youth," as Davis suggests ("Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," p. 311).

13. The dilapidated mill buildings, like the old mill foundation opposite them, no longer exist; they probably were nearly or totally destroyed by the great flash floods that swept away many buildings, bridges, and dams along Mill Creek in 1894, and by other topographical and environmental changes that have occurred since the nineteenth century (John M. Nugent, "The Mill Creek Cloudburst of 1894: Brought About End of Valley as Busy Industrial Center," unidentified article in Mills and Creeks file no. 58, Ludington Public Library, Bryn Mawr, Pa.).

14. For the properties of both Coates brothers, see *Atlas of Properties Along the Pennsylvania Railroad*, pl. 10. The George M. Coates listed here was almost certainly Edward Hornor Coates' brother. George Coates' purchase of the tract from James R. Claghorn is recorded in Montgomery County Deed Book 293, p. 219. Claghorn had owned the property at least since 1881, when his name appears on the 1881 *Atlas of Bryn Mawr and Vicinity* . . . , pl. 8.

15. Edward H. Coates purchased the property from John B. Wood on October 30, 1886 (Montgomery County Deed Book 304, pp. 115–118). The Coates brothers may have known I. Layton Register (see n. 7), who owned the Dove Lake property during the years Eakins worked on the painting. Register, a top life insurance official at the Equitable Society, and Edward Coates, who held financial interests in two Philadelphia insurance companies, must have moved in the same business and social circles. I am grateful to Daniel W. Dietrich II for alerting me to his initial discoveries of Coates' and other relevant names in Bryn Mawr atlases of the period.

16. Numerous books and articles appeared during the 1880s extolling the virtues of swimming. For one of many modern discussions, see Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), esp. pp. 181–215. For a concise summary of the popularity of exercise as it relates to Eakins, see Elizabeth Johns, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 24. Johns' is also the pioneering study of Eakins' incisive portrayals of his Philadelphia contemporaries. Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," pp. 301–341, also provides interesting references to what he calls "male physical 'self culture'" (p. 314) in late-nineteenth-century America.

17. "Academy Exhibition. Fifty-sixth Annual Display," (Philadelphia) *Inquirer*, October 29, 1885.

18. See Appendix, "Exhibition History and Bibliography for *Swimming*." Many more reviewers mentioned Alexander Harrison's painting of naked swimmers, *Bord de mer*, than singled out *Swimming* (see remarks in essays by Foster and Bolger).

19. These various identifications are concisely summarized in Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:332 n. 239:5–9.

20. 1883–88 journal. Subsequent model expenses appeared in the entries for April 30 and May 31, 1885. As Kathleen Foster notes in her essay, Reynolds probably modeled for *Swimming* in earlier sessions. For example, Eakins recorded in the journal a December 31, 1884, session with Reynolds.

21. Bregler, Eakins' student at the academy and the Art Students' League from the early 1880s through the early 1890s, made these identifications on an undated label on the reverse of the Hirshhorn study for *Swimming* (pl. 13). In a letter of April 20, 1943, to Henri Marceau of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA archives), Bregler further identified Godley and Reynolds but did not mention the other figures.

22. Bregler never identified the seated figure outright, but Margaret McHenry wrote in an author's note that he "read the manuscript" for her book *Thomas Eakins Who Painted* (privately printed, 1946) and "agreed to its accuracy." She states, "Wallace is one of the swimmers in 'The Swimming Hole'" (p. 54). Bregler's label on the reverse of the Hirshhorn sketch

notes that the reaching figure, like the reclining one, was Eakins' friend, and Wallace's relationship with Eakins in 1885 could easily be described this way.

23. In 1941, when the Joslyn Art Museum acquired Eakins' portrait of Wallace, Wallace gave an interview to his longtime friend, the Omaha newspaperman Leonard Thiessen: "Eakins painted his favorite pupil Wallace's portrait in 1885. Wallace had just returned to Philadelphia after a highly profitable portrait barnstorming through the wild country west of the Mississippi. He was shortly to leave to fill (on Eakins' recommendation) a teaching post on America's artistic frontier, at the infant Art Institute of Chicago. . . . [Eakins] took advantage of the passing stay of his former student, Wallace, who had often posed for him before [*sic*] . . . as one of the boys in 'The Swimming Hole.'" From "Joslyn Memorial Buys Eakins' Portrait of Wallace," *Omaha World Herald*, June 8, 1941 (Joslyn Art Museum files).

24. In his April 20, 1943, letter to Henri Marceau, Bregler elaborated on his statement on the Hirshhorn label (see n. 21), stating that the reclining figure was the subject of a motion photograph by Eakins (reproduced in Bregler's article "Photos by Eakins," *Magazine of Art* 36 [January 1943]: 29). However, this seems implausible; the figure in the photograph appears older and heavier, and his receding hairline does not correspond to that of the dark-haired man in the painting.

25. Records of Fox's admission to a Philadelphia lunatic asylum in 1892 (see Biographies) state only that he was white and twenty-seven years old, not the color of his hair.

26. The portraits of Frost are in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Detroit Institute of Arts. For Gordon Hendricks' identifications, see *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins* (New York: Grossman, 1974), pp. 160, 349. Furthermore, as Goodrich notes (*Thomas Eakins*, 1: 322 n. 239:5–9), Frost was thirty-three in 1884 (somewhat older than the redhead in the painting appears to be). He had married in October 1883 and moved to Huntington, New York, after which time Thomas and Susan Eakins moved into his Chestnut Street studio. While Susan Eakins recalled in her memoir that the Frosts visited the Eakinses about September 22, 1885, she made no mention of Frost having modeled for *Swimming*. See Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989), microfiche ed., II/6/F/2 and II/6/F/3. According to conversations with Claire Barry, her technical analysis suggests that the month between Frost's visit and the opening of the academy annual would not have allowed Eakins sufficient time to paint the much-reworked redhead and complete the reflections of all the figures.

27. My provisional naming of the youth in figure 22 differs from that in Danly and Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph*, p. 196, cat. no. 388, where he is tentatively identified as George Frank Stephens. By 1885 Stephens would not have been assisting Eakins in the making of such photographs, as by then he was leading the academy students' opposition to their teacher.

28. Godley is the only traveler named by Eakins in his July 31, 1884, record of expenses for the trip (1883–88 journal, p. 50).

29. Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 156, no. 66, and p. 217. The relief is mentioned on p. 76 of Eakins' 1883–88 journal (entry for August 31, 1885) and in several other places. Anshutz mentioned the relief in his August 25, 1884, letter to Wallace (original now lost, transcription in Philadelphia Museum of Art files). Susan Eakins may have been recalling the swimming panel in her memoir, in which she also suggested Wallace's involvement in it. Remembering the date of July 31, she stated: "Tom commences to model Godley for panel with Wallace's figure 1885" (Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, microfiche ed., II/6/D/6).

30. Susan Eakins later recalled that the portrait was begun in 1884 and completed in 1885; see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, microfiche ed., I/7/A/3, I/6/C/1, and I/7/E/6. The painting is listed in the academy catalogue simply as *Portrait*, with George Reynolds as the owner (*Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Fifty-sixth Annual Exhibition Catalogue* [Philadelphia, 1885], p. 13, cat. no. 90). "The Fine Arts," (Philadelphia) *Evening Telegraph*, October 31, 1885, and Eakins' receipt from the Pennsylvania Academy for the return of his three submissions to the annual, confirm that the portrait depicted Reynolds; on the receipt, see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 346, no. 16. Since no other portraits of Reynolds by Eakins are known, it seems likely that this was the painting later called *The Veteran* and included in Eakins' collection at his death. When or why Reynolds would have returned it to the artist is not known. Reynolds' fellow academy student Tommy Eagan recalled that Eakins considered *The Veteran* among his favorite paintings (McHenry, *Thomas Eakins Who Painted*, p. 70).

31. See also Danly and Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph*, cat. nos. 436, 437, 448, 452, 456, and 457.

32. Records of the Ninth Regiment of the New York Cavalry, Company Muster Rolls and Descriptive Books, National Archives, Washington, D.C., cards 4595350 and 33485765.

33. Adam Emory Albright, *Art Interchange*, February 27, 1886, pp. 64–65, quoted in Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins*, p. 155. Both this portrait and that of Reynolds were still in Eakins' collection at his death.

34. Susan Eakins' memoir confirmed that Eakins painted *Professionals at Rehearsal*, as well as *Professor J. Laurie Wallace*, in 1885. See Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, microfiche ed., II/6/F/3, II/7/A/7, and I/7/E/6.

35. See also Danly and Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph*, cat. nos. 358, 360, 361, 362, 374–381, 384, 385, 386, and 387. According to Susan Eakins' reminiscences, Wallace also played a role in the swimming relief.

36. See Elizabeth Dunbar, *Talcott Williams: Gentleman of the Fourth Estate* (Brooklyn: Robert E. Simpson and Son), pp. 184, 262, 263. Dunbar, an art reporter for the Philadelphia *Press*, was Williams' secretary. Williams' great-niece Mary-Averett Seelye notes that the identification of Williams as the reclining figure "appears very reasonable . . . the foot on [the reclining figure's] right leg does what mine does: turn up at the metatarsal" (letter to the author, July 15, 1994, Amon Carter curatorial files). Doreen Bolger first noticed the resemblance of the face of the reclining figure to that of Talcott Williams in figure 29.

37. Dunbar states that from maturity Williams "hid [his lips] under the famous walrus mustache that he never liked" (*Talcott Williams*, p. 148). Williams may also have been the model for the figure of Ezekiel in Eakins' monumental sculpture of ten figures atop Philadelphia's Witherspoon Building. See Maria Chamberlin-Hellman, "Samuel Murray, Thomas Eakins, and the Witherspoon Prophets," *The Arts* 53 (May 1979): n. 53.

38. See Williams' "Animal Locomotion in the Muybridge Photographs," *Century* 34 (July 1887): 356–368, cited in Carolyn Kinder Carr, "A Friendship and a Photograph: Sophia Williams, Talcott Williams, and Walt Whitman," *American Art Journal* 21 (1989): 8 n. 31. See Carr, p. 8 and passim, regarding the experimentation with the latest innovations in photography undertaken by Williams and his wife, Sophia Wells Royce Williams (1850–1928). Sophia was making photographs at least by 1886, when she made a portrait of Walt Whitman, and in 1894 Eakins wrote to her regarding prints to be made from an unidentified negative (September 5, 1894, Amherst College archives).

39. Carr, "A Friendship and a Photograph," p. 3, notes that Williams and Whitman had become close friends at least as early as 1882, citing a letter of that year from Whitman to his friend William D. O'Conner, which states as much. Given Williams' acquaintance with both men by the early 1880s, Eakins and Whitman could have met before 1887. Williams may well have endorsed the Whitmanesque subject and conception of *Swimming*, and his broad interests suggest he would have enjoyed modeling for it. These included his lifelong interest in the classics, which paralleled Eakins' own occupation with the antique, particularly in the years he produced his Arcadian subjects and *Swimming* (Dunbar, *Talcott Williams*, p. 154).

40. See William Innes Homer, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Art* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), p. 116.

41. See, for example, Byrne R. S. Fone, *Masculine Landscapes: Walt Whitman and the Homoerotic Text* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).

42. For Hendricks' statement, see *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work*, p. 156. See Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," passim and p. 326 and n. 56. Davis states that his point is "not to show that Eakins was, or could have identified himself as, 'homosexual'. Rather, the existing judgements both on 'homosexual' sexual actions and on 'homosexuality'—as well as the established view of 'sodomy'—provided reference points which Eakins' desire, in ongoing erotic revision, took account of and moved away from."

43. Foster used this term during the Pennsylvania Academy symposium "New Perspectives on Thomas Eakins," March 28, 1992; see also her chapter "Ella Crowell's Suicide" in Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, esp. pp. 114–120. Johns has referred to the "socio-sexual" nature of Eakins in a number of discussions with the author.

44. Certainly there were other students who were close to Eakins, as evidenced by the numerous figures who appear in the boxing and swimming photographs (see fig. 33). Bregler, Anshutz, and George Frank Stephens were among the other artists Eakins favored (see n. 49). Anshutz can be considered an unseen participant in the *Swimming* project based on his likely role as the photographer of the Bryn Mawr views.

45. The dates of Wallace's service as demonstrator are confirmed by Cheryl Leibold in her letter to the author, December 6, 1994, in Amon Carter curatorial files. Godley is mentioned as a student supervisor of the dissecting room in early 1886 in Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 76, and as a demonstrator in the anatomy class on p. 173. Bregler stated that Reynolds became monitor of the school (Charles Bregler, ["Eakins as a Teacher"], *The Arts* 17, no. 6 [March 1931]: 376–377).

46. The "E" is no longer visible. It may be concealed under a label, inscribed by Bregler, affixed to the back. I am grateful to Penelope Smith, registrar, Joslyn Art Museum, for clarifying this and for providing other assistance with research on Wallace. For more on the use of the "E," see Adam Emory Albright, "Memories of Thomas Eakins," *Harper's Bazaar* 81 (August 1947): 138.

47. Eakins to J. Laurie Wallace, February 27, 1884 (Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 213).

48. Kathleen Foster identifies figure 75 as the painting McHenry referred to as Reynolds' "fine oil painting of a Long Island interior with a fire place . . . that used to hang in Eakins' studio for years" (McHenry, *Thomas Eakins Who Painted*, p. 71). For Reynolds' free admission to life classes, see Pennsylvania Academy Minutes of the Committee on Instruction, September 26, 1883. According to a letter from Cheryl Leibold to the author of December 13, 1994, academy records do not show specific semesters for the students, only years of matricu-

lation (Amon Carter curatorial files). Leibold notes that free admission was fairly common among older, more experienced students whose formal training had been completed. It provided them opportunities to study from a model (letter to the author, December 6, 1994, Amon Carter curatorial files).

49. Although Anshutz wrote to Wallace in the summer of 1884 that he, Eakins, Godley, and Muybridge had been experimenting with cameras at the university, and that Godley had been photographed running with "bright balls" sewn on him, Godley cannot be positively identified in any of the motion photographs made in the shed during the summers of 1884 and 1885 (Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins* 1:239, 270, 272). In her memoir, Susan Eakins recalled that "Tom worked at his moving animal photos with Anshutz + Godley, 1885" (Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, microfiche ed., I/7/E/6). Hendricks erroneously identified Godley as the subject of several of Eakins' motion studies from 1885. Godley is also misidentified as the subject of one of the Naked series of photographs (see fig. 14), probably because his name appears on a drawing by Eakins which seems related to the series. See Ellwood C. Parry III, "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered: Another Look at the Standing Nude Photographs Made for the Use of Eakins's Students," *American Art Journal* 20, no. 2 (1988): figs. 10, 25.

50. See letters from Thomas Eakins and Susan Macdowell Eakins to Wallace in Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, pp. 160, 243, 271.

51. In 1886 Reynolds signed the student petition asking the academy board to "prevail on Mr. Eakins to withdraw his resignation" (Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins*, p. 173, and McHenry, *Thomas Eakins Who Painted*, p. 67).

52. Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work*, p. 178.

53. For a discussion of the influential role Godley and his fellow senior students and instructors played in the creation of student opinion at the time Eakins was dismissed from the academy, see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, pp. 72, 76, 174, 237.

54. Whitney Davis makes much of the convergence of these two reflections; see "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," p. 332.

55. Eakins may have connected the veteran Reynolds with some poetry Whitman wrote during the Civil War: "seething hell and the black infernal background of countless minor scenes and interiors" (Whitman, "The Real War Will Never Get in the Books," *Specimen Days*, in *Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Prose*, p. 778). In *Drum-Taps*, Whitman recorded his elegiac tributes to stalwart, heroic soldiers like Reynolds, in whose personal aspects and often complicated histories as soldiers he became so involved; he described them as the "brown-faced men . . . each person a picture" ("Cavalry Crossing a Ford," *Drum-Taps*, 1865, reprinted in 1871, in *Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Prose*, p. 435).

Elizabeth Johns

Swimming: Thomas Eakins, the Twenty-ninth Bather

Swimming is vintage Eakins. Although in subject matter the picture is unique among his works, it radiates ideals he professed over and again. The models for the painting were his student companions, just as his portrait sitters were fellow Philadelphians devoted to the disciplined life. Meaning in the picture is carried by nude bodies, just as the nude human figure was the focus of the academic training Eakins was handing down to his students. He rendered suntanned flesh and its underlying muscles in the painting in the very way he insisted that his students observe carefully what was before them. And Eakins put the picture together after a probing series of studies, alert—as everything about his teaching informed his students—to what would make the most intense, the most thought-provoking picture. Surely one of the details that provokes the viewer into thought is the presence of Eakins' own image in the lower right foreground. He depicted himself as entering the scene, swimming toward the young men. Above the water, his chunky, graying head and light-skinned upper back and left arm are arrestingly unidealized. A ripple curves across the surface of the lake just in front and to the right of his head, caused perhaps by the action of his right arm or by an exhaled spume of water. In contrast to Eakins' gentle movement, the five swimmers on a ruined mill foundation—none of whom look toward him—seem frozen in their poses. The young man in the lake up to his thighs is so still that the water reflects his image, the middle figure on the ruins is strangely stopped in the process of raising his arm, and even the diver, whose plunging body raises bubbles on the surface at the point of contact, seems curiously suspended. Eakins as swimmer breaks the stasis of the group.

This was not the first time the artist had inserted his image into a picture. In *The Champion, Single Sculls* (fig. 31), a tribute to a friend who had won a race, Eakins painted himself in as a rower in the middle distance, signing the painting on his shell. Yet so far as we know, Eakins rowed only for recreation and never participated in competition. And Eakins placed his image on the front row of the amphitheatre in *The Gross Clinic* (fig. 32), where with pad and pencil he observes and records the surgical operation so that he can paint with authority. But in *Swimming* the image of the artist as part of the scene serves a different function. He is not precisely a colleague of the subjects nor is he a young novice learning from his subjects' professional accomplishments. Rather, here, he seems to be at once companion and point of reference for the younger men. Although the group is ostensibly on an excursion together, Eakins is the only person actually swimming. Is it because he is watching them that the young men pose so self-consciously? Does he move toward their platform to climb out of the water and be with them? Or is he instead urging them to join him? Perhaps the diver plunges in because he has yielded to Eakins' exhortations, and the poses of the others, which point toward the diver, convey that one by one they too will follow.

We cannot know Eakins' precise intentions in painting the scene, and surely a number of implications for him and his students emerged as he planned, painted, and finished it. In subject matter, the painting belongs to the "bather" tradition, as Richard Brettell discusses in his essay. But a powerful dimension of its resonance is not leisure but the orchestration of the complicated relations between a teacher and his students.



FIG. 31. Thomas Eakins, *The Champion, Single Sculls [Max Schmitt in a Single Scull]*, 1871, oil on canvas, 32¼ x 46¼ in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, 1934, Alfred N. Punnett Fund & gift of George D. Pratt

In several respects the scene is analogous to the studied atmosphere of an art academy. Under the careful supervision of a powerful teacher, the subjects of study are nude, at least two of them pose in positions associated with academic modeling sessions, and the secluded setting permits their single-minded concentration on artistic work. Outside the frame of the image, Eakins as master teacher and master artist set the example: his students both participated and observed as he brought into play virtually every artistic step that he emphasized at the academy—sketches, three-dimensional studies in plasticine, photographs (depicting the students lounging on the foundation and wrestling, boxing, and playing tug-of-war in the nearby grass; fig. 33), and the painting itself.

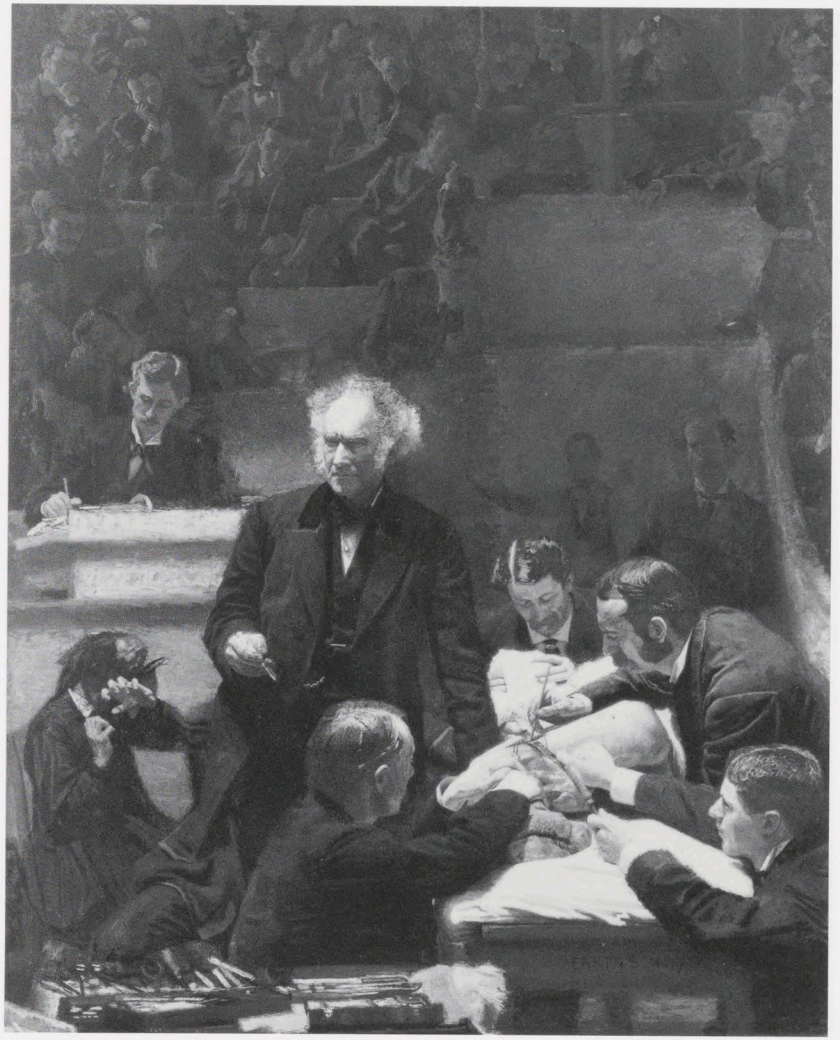


FIG. 32. Thomas Eakins, *The Gross Clinic*, 1875, oil on canvas, 96 x 78 in., Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia



FIG. 33. Thomas Eakins, *Seven males, nude, two boxing at center*, c. 1883, copy negative from dry plate negative, 4 x 5 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.1025

And at a period when there was much interest in bringing into modern life ideals from Greek antiquity, *Swimming* certainly alludes as well to such "Greek" values fundamental to academic discipline as bodily beauty and mental control. In Philadelphia as elsewhere new forms of physical activity in public life—such as the rowing Eakins so much enjoyed—took inspiration from what was known about Greek physical culture, in which exercise groomed the body and the mind. On both sides of the Atlantic, history painters and writers of fiction cultivated affection for Greek stories, historical figures, and costumes. Eakins' students acted out skits and made photographs of each other in Greek dress and poses, and at least one figure in *Swimming*—the reclining man on the left—assumed the pose of an antique sculpture. Eakins also planned a tribute to Phidias, his counterpart in classical Greece (pl. 9), although he did not complete the painting.[1]

In this environment of mutual respect for the endeavors of the arts and sciences, Eakins might well have compared his leadership to that of Plato in the informal outdoor academy in ancient Athens. Plato, following his own mentor, Socrates, had taught his young followers how to debate definitions of truth, virtue, and public behavior. Like Socrates, Plato urged self-awareness, insisting that his students stand outside themselves and evaluate their position from the point of view of a listener. Included in the course of daily activities was a variety of physical exercise that included wrestling and boxing, exercises that relieved the tension of mental work, but that even more importantly established the students in a community in which the rhetoric of the body, like the rhetoric of language, revealed inner strengths.

The ambitious and malleable young men like those who had flocked to Plato might well have seemed to Eakins to be the prototypes of those academy students with whom he created a world as informal and yet as tightly structured on intellectual principles, as loosely grouped and yet as separate from the rest of society, as Plato's. To be "academic" was to be like the ancient Greeks—to throw in one's lot with a dedicated community who, under a brilliant teacher, pursued a disciplined course of study that aimed to unite the seen world of physical beauty with the unseen but experienced world of mental clarity. Eakins, like Plato, inspired community in his students. In his intensity, he demanded loyalty from them; they quickly learned to call him "Boss." The young men in *Swimming*—trained, self-confident, the pupils of a master—strike a stance, aware of a teacher who models for them the art of "swimming."

The associations of homosociality with Greek antiquity mean that for many viewers today every dimension of the painting—the nudity, the stud-

ied posing, and the observing swimmer—could be commandeered to have the image read as a conscious meditation on sexuality. And indeed, Eakins seemed to have had deep affection—even jealousy—for his students. The dilemma for contemporary interpretation is to decide whether the sexual atmosphere in the image alludes to specific sexual practices or to Eakins' more general absorption in the sensuality of the body. A generation ago even to include sexuality in interpretations of the painting would have been unthinkable. The critical climate has changed, of course, and now the issue is not whether but how to discuss sexuality, that is, whether to use pictures to gratify contemporary hunger to know—or at least to speculate on—the precise sexual orientation of our predecessors. Such gratification can satisfy our desires to find kinship across the decades or centuries, but it can also "appropriate" a figure so specifically in his or her life outside the picture that the art itself loses richness and indeterminacy.[2] Since we cannot question the artist, all we can examine are our own objectives as art historians and their relation to historical evidence.

Sexuality is without doubt crucial to *Swimming*. Because sexual energy echoes throughout much of Eakins' work, the painting is most richly interpreted as not preference-specific (that is, as not explicitly homosexual). Eakins restricted neither his emotions nor the behavior associated with high feelings to his male students. Indeed, his sensuality in both his pictures and his behavior as it comes down to us in letters and accounts resembles that expressed in the poetry of his friend and older contemporary, Walt Whitman: it is a passionate devotion to the body and to the material manifestations of the spirit within it.[3]

The tradition is that Eakins met Whitman in 1887, when he went to Camden with Talcott Williams, long a Whitman supporter, to paint Whitman's portrait (fig. 34). Because Eakins had known Williams for some time, however, and Whitman's reputation was widespread, Eakins had perhaps met him earlier. In the 1890s, he knew Whitman's poetry so well that he

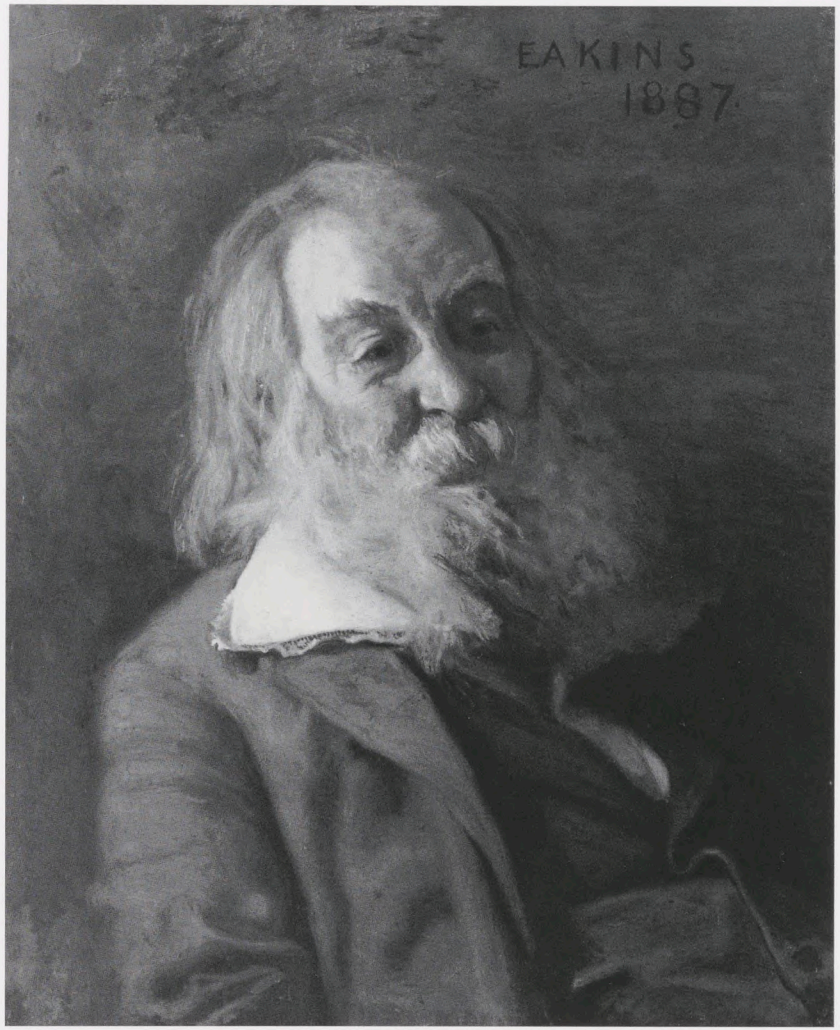


FIG. 34. Thomas Eakins, *Walt Whitman*, 1888, oil on canvas, 30⅛ x 24¼ in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, General Fund

told Weda Cook as she posed for her portrait (singing a song composed from Whitman's "Captain, My Captain") that what he liked most about the poet's work was the prominence in it of the body.[4]

The two men, regardless of when they actually met, shared a sensibility. From 1855, when Whitman published his first version of his long poem *Leaves of Grass*, the poet had celebrated the physical nature and the sexuality of Americans ordinary and unusual, all ages, both genders, and from all regions. Whitman was a consummate realist—devoted to the here and now, seeing promise for the future in the physical landscape and in humble as well as noble human pursuits. Like Eakins a scrupulous craftsman, continuously refining and enlarging his vision, Whitman added to and revised *Leaves of Grass* right up until near his death. And Whitman in his character as himself and as poet—the identities blended into one another—dominated his work. He used the first person to celebrate his own being, an affection for the self that he saw as the source of his love for others.

In his commonality with Whitman, Eakins' love for the material fabric and sexuality of the body radiated from all that he did. First, he loved the body itself. As a young man, he had written to his father during the days of his studies at the Louvre that he hated the falsity of Bouguereau and the salacious aspects of contemporary French paintings of nudity. "[The nude female body] is the most beautiful thing there is in the world except a naked man but I never yet saw a study of one exhibited."[5] During his training he was eager to paint from life rather than draw from casts, and when he became a teacher he often let his students bypass the casts and begin drawing from the nude model. As director of instruction at the academy, Eakins insisted that the nude human body is the basis of all art, the anchor of experience and meaning.

In his career as a painter—moving from training to practice—he had difficulty in transferring his affection for the nude body into paintings about physical nudity. Audiences in Philadelphia were conservative, as they



FIG. 35. Thomas Eakins, *The Agnew Clinic*, 1889, oil on canvas, 74½ x 130½ in., University of Pennsylvania Art Collection

were elsewhere. But bent on finding a way to combine nudity and real life, early in his Philadelphia career Eakins conceived the idea of painting a scene of the early Philadelphia sculptor William Rush at work on an allegorical figure in 1809, sculpting from the nude model. The idea was a triumph of the imagination. Oral tradition had it that a prominent young woman had posed for Rush, and although it was highly unlikely that she had posed nude, Eakins imaged her in *William Rush Carving the Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* (see pl. 7) as splendidly unclothed. She stands on a humble podium with a dictionary on her shoulder to maintain her pose, and with the magic of Eakins' brush the light falls across her to reveal a slender, graceful, and very real, young female body. As though to take up Whitman's insistence that clothing was in some respects dishonest because it disguised healthy nudity, Eakins emphasized the bright clothing



FIG. 36. Thomas Eakins, *Maud Cook*, 1895, oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in., Yale University Art Gallery, bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903

that the model had laid on a chair next to her podium. Although he found few other subjects so congenial to nudity—*Swimming*, of course, was another inspiration—Eakins made blatant the nakedness or near-nakedness of the patients in both his surgical paintings (*The Gross Clinic*, fig. 32, and *The Agnew Clinic*, fig. 35).

Although he could devise few opportunities to incorporate the nude body into finished paintings, in many of his portraits Eakins made much of the rich materiality of his sitters' faces. He saw flesh as almost inevitably beautiful. Even though people complained that his portraits were ugly, Eakins maintained that he found all his sitters beautiful. As nudity conveyed the nobility of the human body, a face revealed the journey of the spirit, and Eakins found women's faces in particular to bring forth all his capabilities. This was especially true after 1886, when Eakins was forced to resign from the Pennsylvania Academy. One sees in such works as the portrait of Weda Cook as *The Concert Singer* (1892, Philadelphia Museum of Art) and *Edith Mahon* (1904, Smith College Museum of Art) Eakins' insinuation into the bodies and faces of his sitters the erosion of self-confidence that he had experienced after his forced resignation and the subsequent guardedness of self with which he lived thereafter. Many of these portraits are so sensual and invasive that they verge on the erotic. In at least one of them, Eakins recognized this effect, even though he may not have planned it. He called the portrait of Maud Cook (fig. 36) a "rosebud," choosing a time-honored symbol of virginity to make specific an image of a young woman who seems to have just become aware of sexual experience. In this work, as in others, Eakins was like Whitman—a sensualist absorbing the physicality of his sitters and in turn investing in it the complexity of his own desires.

Whereas painting generally frustrated Eakins' interest in nudity, photography enabled him to exploit it freely. He trained his camera almost exclusively—so far as we can tell—on the human figure and face. Taking up photography not long before he painted *Swimming*, and sharing his camera



FIG. 37. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins, nude, semireclining on couch, from rear*, c. 1883, copy negative from a dry-plate negative, 4 x 5 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.1009

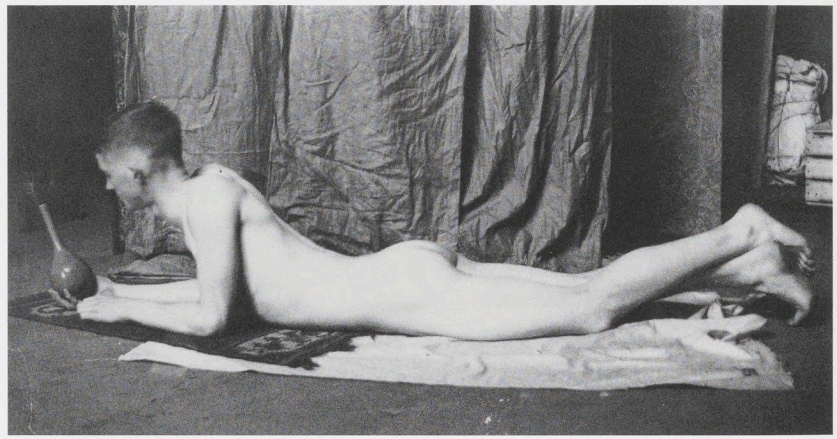


FIG. 38. Thomas Eakins, *Bill Duckett nude, lying on stomach, holding vase*, c. 1889, platinum print, 5 11/16 x 11 in. (irr.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.410

and interest in photographs with members of his circle, Eakins used it to approach the body in several ways. For a few years, at least, he and his students made "scientific" photographs that studied principles of balance and movement. With sequenced photographs called the Naked series, poses that he and his students took of each other in about 1883, Eakins analyzed the behavior of muscles when the body assumed seven different positions (see fig. 14). Both male and female students posed for these studies, and people of slender, medium, and large body builds. In another investigative activity, Eakins took a number of motion-study photographs, and for some of them he joined Eadweard Muybridge in a project at the University of Pennsylvania. Eakins' eagerness to take up these projects spilled over into other photographic projects that he devised, all of which took place within only a few years.

He made many photographs that celebrate the beauty of the male body. These images, too, involve other photographers. Distinctly not "scientific" but rather personal and meditative, these photographs depict male figures in poses associated with the feminine. As did Whitman, Eakins began with himself. At least one image of the artist in the classic pose of an odalisque—

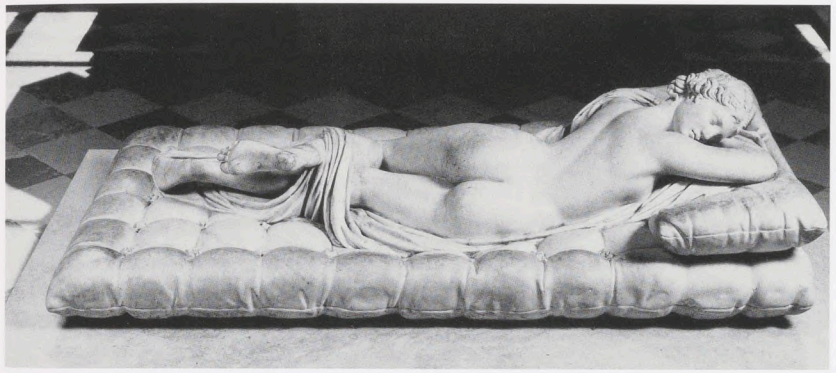


FIG. 39. *Hermaphrodite Sleeping*, marble, restored in 1620 by Bernini, 57⅞ in., Musée du Louvre, Paris © Photo R.M.N.



FIG. 40. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins nude and J. Laurie Wallace nude, from rear, in front of boat at shoreline*, c. 1883, albumen print, 3½ x 4 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.454

a female harem figure—has survived, this in a platinum enlargement as well as in a cropped negative (fig. 37). The pose is soft, as though the artist were trying out a visualization of an idealization of his own middle-aged body. And several photographs have come to light of the model Bill Duckett, who posed for what seems to have been a sequence of images of the slender young male body in poses all comparable to ones traditionally assumed by female models (fig. 38). Eakins seems to have taken these photographs himself. The most interesting association is that between one of Duckett's poses and the antique sculpture *Hermaphrodite* (fig. 39), which existed in two casts at the Pennsylvania Academy. Because Duckett had been or was at this time Whitman's companion, by using Duckett as a model Eakins may have been alluding explicitly to Whitman's affections for the male body beautiful.[6]

Eakins and his group made still other photographs that seem to involve creating a fantasy world. In a series of outdoor photographs made on the New Jersey shore, he and several nude male friends (including men from Susan Eakins' family) assume poses that re-create the beautiful boy-world of classical Greece. Young men in twos stroll the shore like a modern Castor and Pollux—the twin brothers who could not bear to be apart—and in an-



FIG. 41. Thomas Eakins, *Male nude, wearing headscarf, and boy nude, at edge of river*, c. 1882, albumen print, 3 9/16 x 4 3/8 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.458

other reconstruction, an older man and an adolescent boy seem to re-create a Greek love pairing (figs. 40, 41). Made during the same period that Eakins worked on *Swimming*, these works seem to be part of a single emotional and intellectual project. Some of them Eakins incorporated into a few paintings on the theme of Arcadia, with nude figures (all male) in a dreamy landscape.

Although many of his photographs can be categorized as either "scientific" or meditative, others, like the Arcadian fantasies, cannot. Eakins, in fact, made many photographs during his middle years that seem to have been prompted by a sheer affection for nudity. He photographed Susan both before and after their marriage, including several images from the late 1880s in which she stood naked against a horse. He photographed nude children, some his nephews but others as yet unidentified. Eakins appears more than any other figure in the nude photographs that he made while at the academy. He did this in the guise of carrying out himself the activity that others might have been too shy to undertake, claiming that "it is not right for one to profit by [nude] study who is unwilling to allow his or her body to be seen."[7] And despite academy rules—and certainly convention—students or friends made photographs of Eakins and a female model in his studio, both nude, showing that Eakins not only tolerated but participated in simultaneous nudity of both genders and of teacher and student (fig. 42). This took place in his work at the University of Pennsylvania as well (fig. 43).

Eakins, like Whitman, was extraordinarily self-absorbed. The physical "I" of these men was all-important to their vision. Whitman, in the photograph that was engraved for the frontispiece of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, is the lover, not so much looking at us as, with his slightly open mouth, challenging us to look at him (fig. 44). Eakins, about the same point in his life, is the jokester, grinning in front of a blank stretched canvas (and the back side of the canvas at that), himself the only author of his identity. The presence of a friend in a bowler hat, hovering over the canvas, emphasizes that such a role came from the exclusive world of the studio (fig. 45). Both images challenge the viewer: with Whitman, to become the loafer, the lover; with Eakins, to become the irreverent artist comfortable with his defiance.

But for both men being an "I" and being in charge was lonely. Eakins and Whitman shared a hunger for comradeship. Even though they chal-



FIG. 42. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins nude, holding nude female in his arms, looking at camera*, c. 1885, copy negative from dry-plate negative, 4 x 5 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.848

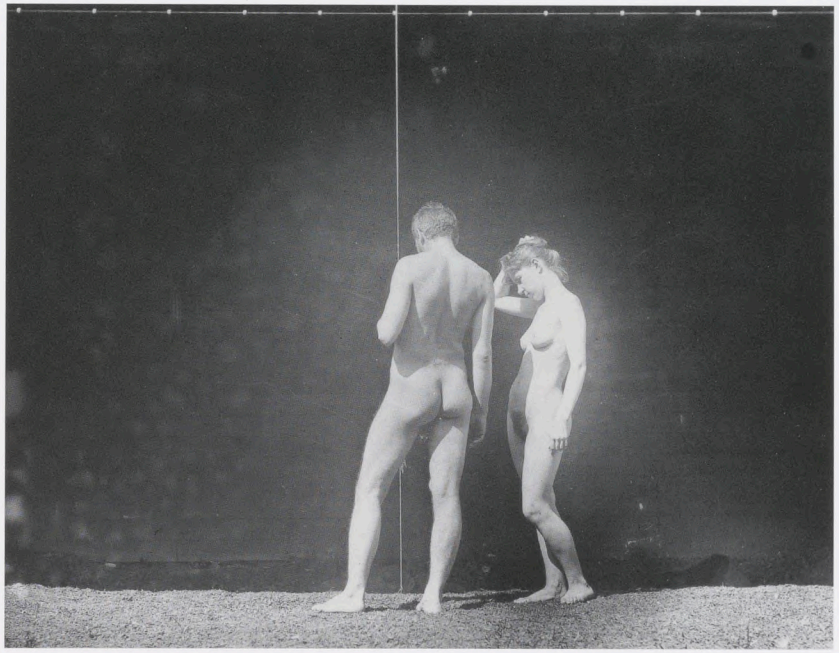


FIG. 43. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins nude, and female nude, in the University of Pennsylvania photography shed*, 1885, copy negative from dry-plate negative, 4 x 5 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.1006

lenged certain conventions to a degree that threatened many around them, they both looked for connections. They identified people with whom they might share their philosophy, or on whom they could rely for emotional support, and with this group about them they lived their professional and everyday lives. Not surprisingly, both men did not find comradeship so much as they played the role of "sponsor." Although he championed "amativeness" (which implies equality), Whitman built a community of himself and one male companion at a time, posing over the years for a number of photographic "marriage" portraits with one young companion after another. In these images, such as that in figure 46, Whitman is seated and the young companion stands beside and just behind him. The overtones of a partnership in which subservience and dominance were the keynotes are unmistakable in these photographs: Whitman takes the role of the husband; like Eakins, he was the one who was obeyed. Eakins dominated whatever he did. In the nude photographs associated with the Arcadia series, Eakins appears again and again, often as a piper, literally "calling the tune" for the imaginary participants in this outdoor fantasy (fig. 47). Although Eakins had close companions, notably his wife, Susan, Samuel Murray, and Charles

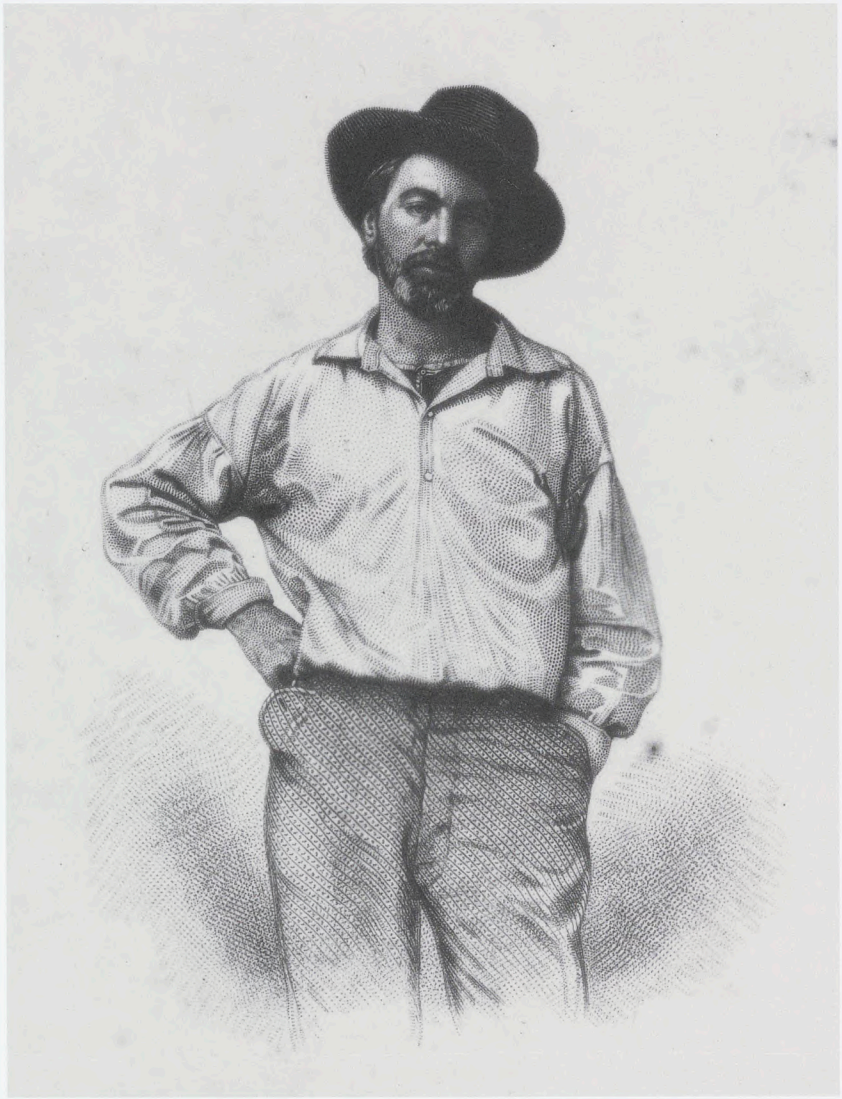


FIG. 44. *Walt Whitman*, frontispiece for *Leaves of Grass*, 1855 edition, engraved by Samuel Hollyer, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MA 6069



FIG. 45. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins at age thirty-five to forty in a heavy wool jacket*, c. 1882, copy negative from dry-plate negative, 4 x 5 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.845

Bregler (all considerably younger than he), he flourished as the person in charge. As teacher, he brought his students to life as maturing artists. As painter, he chose sitters whose self-discipline paralleled his own.

Eakins' own position as teacher and artist, like Whitman's, is very much like that of the lover fashioned by the poet in "Twenty-eight young men." Here, Whitman as the woman who is both poet and character in the poem brings the young men into full sexual experience, but, in the self-centeredness of immaturity, they do not recognize her agency:

Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore,
28 young men and all so friendly;
28 years of womanly life and all so lonesome.
She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank
She hides handsome and richly drest aft the blinds of the window.
Which of the young men does she like the best?
Ah the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.
Where are you off to, lady? for I see you,
You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.
Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth bather,
The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved them.
The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it ran from their long hair,
Little streams pass'd all over their bodies,
An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies,
It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.
The young men float on their backs, their white bellies bulge to the sun, they do not ask who seizes fast to them,
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending arch,
They do not think whom they souse with spray.[8]

Here in Whitman's poem are the two worlds in Eakins' picture: one inhabited by high-spirited young men—the subjects of *Swimming*—the other



FIG. 46. *Walt Whitman and Bill Duckett*, c. 1886, tintype, 4⅜ x 3⅞₁₆ in., in Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, KLW Saunders 79.1



by an observing presence that rejoices in their beauty and loves them with a tenderness and passion of which they are oblivious. It is not selfishness that blinds them, but the very nature of their youth. And the figure who loves them, who is "womanly," "lonesome," "handsome," yet "dancing and laughing," is the artist—giving pleasure, instructing, and delighting in his creation.

The great irony of Eakins' creation of *Swimming* is that within a few months after he completed it he would be forced to relinquish his position and all that he cherished at the academy. He had given rein to his authoritative and sensual nature at great cost.

But in 1885 all was—on the surface at least—still well. Eakins, the consummate teacher, yearns toward his students as he yearned toward his sitters, loving the beauty of their flesh, delighting in the splendor of their intelligence and achievement, and recording the vulnerability that he knew so well. Bringing his students and sitters to life, he is Whitman's twenty-ninth bather.

FIG. 47. Circle of Eakins, *Thomas Eakins nude, playing pipes, facing right*, c. 1883, platinum print, 6 7/16 x 3 1/16 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.487

NOTES

1. Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 1982), 1:236–237. For other of Eakins' references to Phidias and Greek sculpture, see Marc Simpson, "Thomas Eakins and His Arcadian Works," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 71–95.

2. Several art historians in the last few years have discussed incidents in Eakins' life that raise questions about his attitudes toward women and heterosexuality, attitudes that may or may not be revealed in his work. In the first full probing of these issues in 1989, Kathleen Foster in *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989], pp. 39–139) drew on documents and photographs that had recently come to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. With consummate tact and subtlety she analyzed much that had been known or speculated about Eakins but had not yet been discussed in print. Very recently, art historians have begun to argue that *Swimming* reveals that Eakins was homosexual. For such an interpretation of this painting, one that focuses exclusively on its sexual implications, see Whitney Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301–341. Davis analyzes the picture from the point of view of Lacanian and other revisions of Freud's theories of the discharge, reservation, and retrospective revision of wishes—specifically in this painting, of homosexual desires. The evidence of letters and photographs indicates that Eakins *was* sloppy about sexual decorum. All else is oral tradition.

3. In the last several years, Whitman as been studied as explicitly homosexual. See, for instance, Michael Moon, *Disseminating Whitman: Revision and Corporeality in "Leaves of Grass"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

4. Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2:31.

5. Ibid., 1:28–29.

6. I discuss these in my essay "An Avowal of Artistic Community: Nudity and Fantasy in Thomas Eakins' Photographs," in Susan Danly and Cheryl Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994), pp. 65–93.

7. Foster in Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 113.

8. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose* (New York: Random House, 1950), pp. 31–32.

Richard R. Brettell

Thomas Eakins and the Male Nude in French Vanguard Painting, 1850–1890

Thomas Eakins ended a lengthy and seminal stay in France and on the Continent with a visit to the Salon of 1870.[1] While there, he almost certainly saw a revolutionary painting of male bathers by the young French artist Frédéric Bazille, who just months later was to be killed in a battle during the Franco-Prussian War. Eakins probably never met Bazille, who operated in very different—and more aesthetically advanced—circles than the American, but there is no doubt that Eakins was thoroughly prepared for Bazille's awkward but powerful work. Indeed, the brilliant American had already lamented contemporary representations of the nude by 1867, his first full year in France, in a letter written after he had seen the immense—and, from all accounts, immensely dull—exhibition of painting held in the International Exhibition of that year. "The French court has become very decent since Eugenie [the Spanish-born empress of France] had fig leaves put on all the statues in the Tuileries. When a man paints a naked woman he gives her less than poor nature did. I can conceive of few circumstances wherein I would have to paint a naked woman, but if I did, I would not mutilate her for double the money. She is the most beautiful thing there is—except a naked man, but I never saw a study of one exhibited—It would be a godsend to see a fine man painted in a studio with bare walls. . . . I hate affectation."[2]

It was the simple honesty of painted representation that appealed to Eakins, and surely that honesty must have struck him when he saw Bazille's *Summer Scene*. For both young artists, as for many of their generation trained in France, the quintessential subject of classical sculpture, the nude, presented a continuing challenge to the art of painting, and, in order to succeed as a painter, representational mastery over the human body was vital. Eakins' own greatest painting of male nudes, *Swimming*, was completed more than a decade later and has few stylistic relationships to Bazille's work. Yet each work struggles to define a role in painting for both the contemporary nude and the male nude.

The female nude dominates what we now call the discourse surrounding the origins of modern European painting.[3] The history of modern art begins with Manet's female nudes of 1863, and discussions of class, sex (or, rather, sexism), commodification, sources, "style," and other issues that emerge from repeated analyses of *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia* (both Musée d'Orsay, Paris) dominate our very idea of pictorial modernism.[4] The extraordinary advances made in feminist art history have centered on the interpretation of the female nude, and one can scarcely imagine the most trenchant work of Linda Nochlin, Griselda Pollock, Norma Broude, Tamar Garb, Kathleen Adler, and others without images of female nudity.[5] "Sexism" and the sexuality of human discourse in art seems optimally inscribed on the nude (or naked) female body.

Yet, oddly enough, a good many of the most powerful and ambiguous vanguard paintings of the nude made in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s represent not the female, but the male nude, and very few of these works have been subjected to the kind of rigorously critical analysis reserved for representations of women. Indeed, in a direct descent from Courbet's *Wrestlers* of 1853 (fig. 48), modern artists have created images of male nudes (or almost-



FIG. 48. Gustave Courbet, *The Wrestlers*, 1853, oil on canvas, 98⅞ x 77⅝ in., Szépmüvészeti Múzeum, Budapest

nudes) that should be analyzed in terms analogous to their better-known images of the female nude. One can immediately cite works by Corot, Puvis de Chavannes, Degas, Couture, Renoir, Bazille, Cézanne, Caillebotte, Gauguin, and Manet in French art alone—and examples from Liebermann to Von Marées or Munch outside the French national tradition.[6]

These works, however, must be considered a hidden tradition,[7] because many were neither exhibited nor published during the lifetimes of their artists, and others were greeted with such controversy, even in progressive circles, that their appearances were suppressed. Exemplifying the first approach are Degas' two large paintings *Young Spartans Exercising* (fig. 49 and a monochrome version in the Art Institute of Chicago).[8] These ambitious "history" paintings, the first in Degas' career, deal not with an elevated and specific historical subject but, rather, with a sort of classical genre scene. In his depiction of the training of young Spartan boys and girls, Degas represented some of both genders in the nude. Although all Degas scholars suggest that the paintings were begun about 1860, only the larger of the two versions (fig. 49) was finished for exhibition in 1880, twenty years after its genesis; for reasons we shall never know, Degas failed to include it in the fifth Impressionist exhibition itself, although it is listed in the catalogue.[9] Was this the artist's own suppression of his work? Degas, who seems never to have exhibited a male nude, may have lost his nerve when it came time to show this powerful work that deals directly with the training and cultural significance of the body. Similarly, Renoir, whose only male nude is among the most apparently "perverse" paintings in the history of modern art, never exhibited his *Boy with a Cat* (see fig. 54), and, in fact, the painting was not included in any exhibition until 1994.[10]

An example of the second sort of suppression is Gustave Caillebotte's masterful *Man at Bath* of 1884 (fig. 50). This superb work, among the masterpieces of Caillebotte's short career, was sent in 1888 to the vanguard exhibition of Les XX in Brussels, where, in spite of the progressive aims of

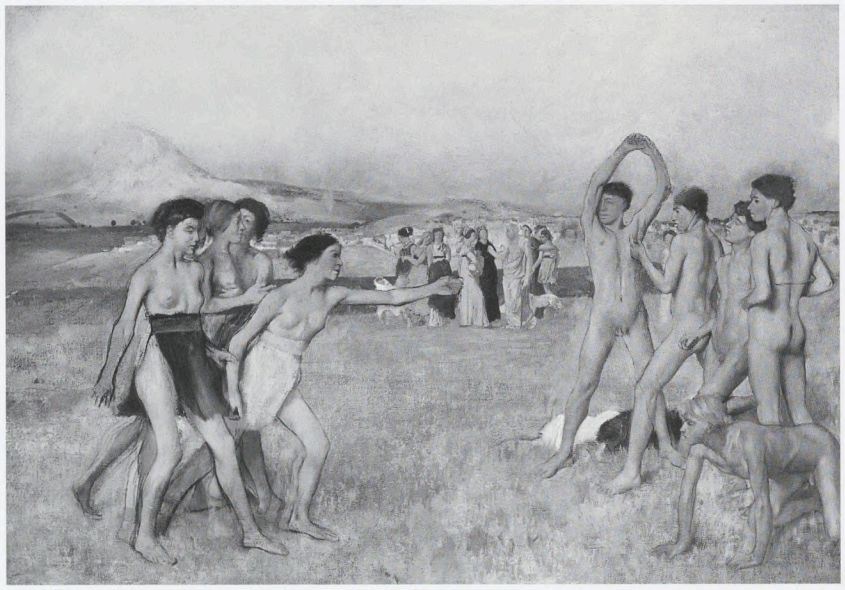


FIG. 49. Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, *Young Spartans Exercising*, c. 1860, oil on canvas, 42⅞ x 60½ in., The National Gallery, London, NG3860

the organizers, it seems to have excited such controversy that it was moved to a closet or locked room outside the exhibition proper.[11] Clearly, the kind of ambivalence toward the male nude that continues to this day in photography and films was very much present in the nineteenth century, even among progressive artists. And, as all students of Eakins' career have shown, the controversy that swirled around the American master reached its zenith at the time he painted his only great representation of the male nude, *Swimming*.

How and why did this tradition develop when it did? It is a truism to say that the male nude is the central subject of Western sculpture and that, from the Greeks onward, nudity was considered more appropriate to male subjects than to female ones. There is, for example, no full-scale nude female in Greek sculpture of the sixth century B.C., despite the fact that there

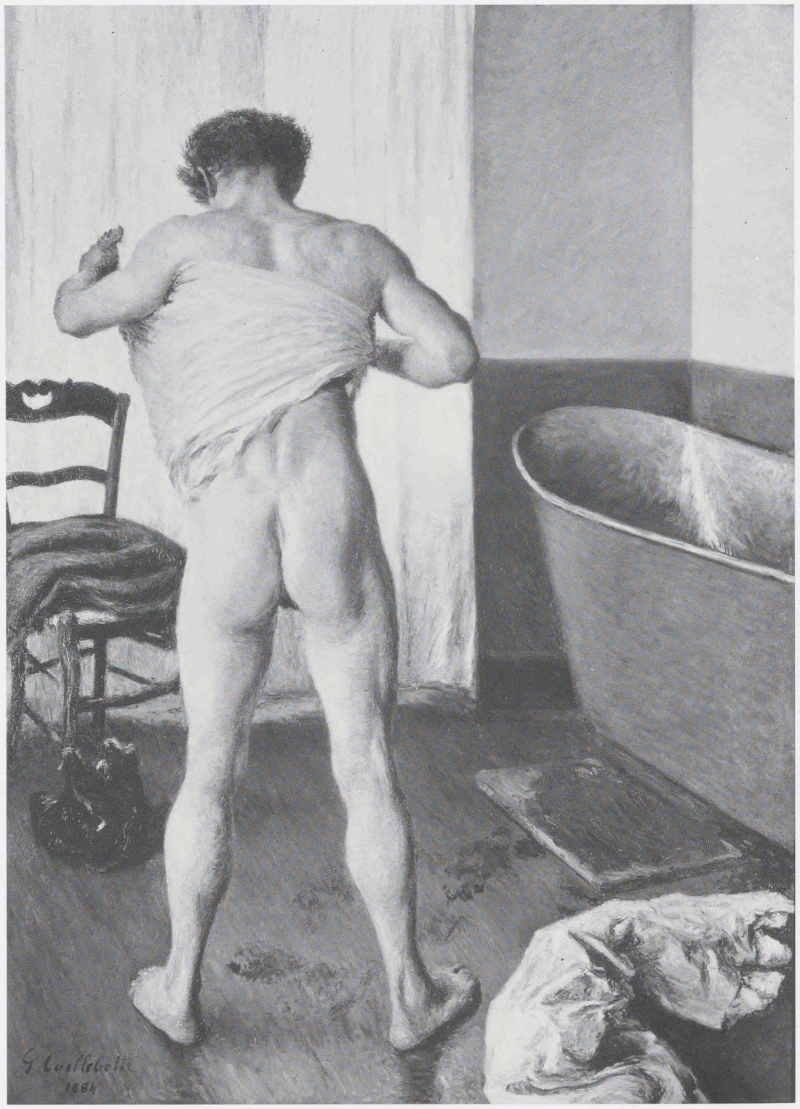


FIG. 50. Gustave Caillebotte, *Man at Bath*, 1884, oil on canvas, 67¼ x 49¼ in., Josefowitz Collection

are literally hundreds of full-scale nude male figures. (Many art historians claim that the first female nude in Greek sculpture is the *Dying Naiad* of the late fifth century.) There are also comparatively few female nudes in later Greek and Roman sculpture and in Renaissance sculpture, in which male nudity abounds and female nudity, though not rare, is of lesser quantitative significance. However, by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, female nudity fully entered the realm of painting, sharing it equally with male nudes well into the seventeenth century, when male nudity in both painting and sculpture began a long, slow decline.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, male nudity was reserved for select scenes of classical history or for religious paintings of the death of Christ, St. Sebastian, and other martyrs. There were exceptions, but few, suggesting that, by 1800, male nudity signified the past in its variously classical guises. For French art, there is one powerful exception, Géricault's immense *Raft of the Medusa* of 1819 (Musée du Louvre, Paris). Because it represented a scene from contemporary history, included detailed descriptions of nude male (rather than female) bodies, and because it was then, as it is now, a famous work of art, the painting must be seen as the touchstone for all subsequent painters who made an attempt to represent the male nude.

The first major vanguard painting that dealt forcefully—and officially—with the male nude in a contemporary setting was Frédéric Bazille's *Summer Scene* (see fig. 53).[12] Painted in 1869–70, it was accepted (to the surprise of its maker) in the Salon of 1870. Curiously, the painting was submitted with an equally large and ambitious orientalist painting of a full-scale female nude, which was rejected by the jury.[13] *Summer Scene* can be read as Bazille's response to the larger *Wrestlers* (see fig. 48) of Courbet, whom Bazille had met by the spring of 1866 and with whom he remained on good terms throughout his life.[14] The "embedded tradition" of the male nude is pushed to America because Thomas Eakins probably saw Bazille's painting at the Salon of 1870.

For this reason, Eakins' American painting *Swimming*, of 1885, engages directly with a newly emerging European tradition that took on added force in the 1870s, when Cézanne began to paint male bathers almost obsessively. Few American paintings of the nineteenth century play important roles in sequences of major works of European art, and Eakins' *Swimming* is one of those few. It is the intention of this essay to place the work in a larger history of art rather than the American history to which it is most often relegated. The sequence of male nudes by Courbet, Bazille, and Eakins can be seen as a real sequence of works that demand to be interpreted both in regard to one another and as a cumulative response to a tradition of painting that gave privilege to the female nude as the carrier of meaning for male artists and male viewers. Courbet, Bazille, and Eakins had the courage to confront issues relating to the body by using the male body. They also created powerful images of male bodies for public exhibitions at which members of both sexes and all ages could freely analyze these images. The wrestling men and all-male swimming were wrenched from the complete privacy that they occupied in actual life and were liberated or opened to public scrutiny through representation. Was this maneuver any less radical—either aesthetically or socially—than Manet's liberation of the naked courtesan from her position of dominated privacy or from the corners of the bois de Boulogne to the Salon itself?

The answer, unfortunately, is yes. We know from counting column inches of criticism that Manet's confrontational courtesans were infinitely more shocking to French, European, and American viewers of the Salon des Refusés in 1863 and the Salon of 1865 than the (almost) nude men of Bazille were in the Salon of 1870. Perhaps because of this, they remain dominating today. Yet, it must be remembered that Eakins lost his job at the Pennsylvania Academy over issues of morality and freedom foreshadowed in *Swimming* and that Caillebotte's greatest male nude was actually censored from a major exhibition of vanguard art. Given this, we must ask an obvious ques-

tion. Had Bazille's bathers in *Summer Scene* actually been nude, as he planned them to be, and had the painting been shown at a Salon when the French were less distracted by politics and economics than they were in the late spring and early summer of 1870, would the history of modern art have been differently written?[15] Sadly, we shall never know, because Bazille lost his nerve and covered what would have been the offending genitalia with trunks, and, within months, the French were at war with the Prussians, rendering issues that would have consumed all Paris in 1865 marginal in 1870. Indeed, Bazille himself was dead within five months of the exhibition of *Summer Scene*.

Given his oft-quoted comment about the ultimate beauty of the male body, Eakins must have been struck by the naturalism and utter frankness of Bazille's bathers. There were not many representations of the male nude that could compete with Bazille's in the Salon.[16] Eakins' command of the French language was excellent, but it is unlikely that he read the gushy but fascinating descriptive analysis of Bazille's painting by Manet's and Degas' friend Zacharie Astruc, or the more measured passage by Edmond Duranty, who would go on to champion the young Impressionists in his brilliant review of their 1876 exhibition.[17] Eakins had too little time to keep up with the critics and probably was preoccupied with the arrangements for his own return to the United States after more than two years in Europe. Yet, perhaps he did see the widely circulated caricature of Bazille's painting by Bertall in *Le Journal Amusant*, which, in itself, raises fascinating issues about the representation of desire in works of art.[18]

During those two years and the decade that followed them, Eakins was intermittently faithful to the academic art practices and norms of his French master, Gérôme (although the extent of this fidelity has been exaggerated by modern students of Eakins and Gérôme).[19] We have learned from students of French academic practice like Albert Boime and Gerald Ackerman and from Kathleen Foster and Barbara Weinberg, who studied the American students of Gérôme and his compatriots, that Gérôme's attitudes toward art were completely opposed to those espoused by the young artists Monet, Sisley, Renoir, and Pissarro, with whom Bazille worked. Yet when Eakins himself turned to the subject of *Swimming*, he most likely did so with a clear memory of Bazille's work.

Few visitors to the 1870 Salon could have missed *Summer Scene* when it made its only nineteenth-century appearance. At once large and vividly colored, it must have virtually screamed from the walls of the Salon galleries. Its size was calculated for a favorable hanging—at once large enough to play a major role on a wall, square so that it would most likely have been centered on the wall, and small enough to prevent its being "skied," as were canvases of truly immense size. When we compare it to a highly successful, but slightly earlier, Salon painting dealing with male nudity by Henri Regnault, another young artist who was not to survive the Franco-Prussian War, the real originality—and the "naturalness"—of Bazille's seemingly contrived composition becomes clear. Regnault's *Automedon with the Horses of Achilles* (fig. 51) ensured the reputation of its young painter with its powerful figure, its extraordinary horses, and its post-Romantic swagger.[20] For Regnault, the male nude signified "classical history," and with the rippling muscles and gigantic horses derived from Leonardo, Rubens, and Delacroix, Regnault's composition was so completely concocted as to be almost comic. Eakins also saw Regnault's "masterpiece," but, fortunately for his subsequent reputation, he was smart enough to take more cues from Bazille than from Regnault.

In painting *Summer Scene*, Bazille set himself a series of pictorial problems that would have made Regnault wince—the integration of eight separately observed male figures (one mostly immersed in the water) in a light-filled landscape that is itself as visually interesting and varied as the figures. As if in recognition of the difficulty of these "problems," Bazille worked harder and for a longer period at this painting than at any other Salon



FIG. 51. Henri Alexandre Georges Regnault, *Automedon with the Horses of Achilles*, 1868, oil on canvas, 124 x 129½ in., gift by subscription, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

painting of his short career. Several letters allow us to understand its genesis. It was begun in April 1869 in Paris, where he made a series of figure drawings about which he wrote his father: "I am sketching in ahead of time the figures for the painting of male nudes I plan on doing in Méric."[21] In another letter, written from Méric to Paris, Bazille indicated that he would arrive in Paris with only one canvas, which he called "the nude men" and which was unfinished and unresolved. In neither of these letters does he refer to the painting in terms of bathing, stressing instead simply the nudity of the male figures.[22] This supports a reading of the painting as a study of male nudity in which the subject of bathing is largely a pretext for that nudity.

When considered in this light, the most remarkable aspect of the finished painting is that none of the figures is actually nude. Clearly, Bazille dithered over this. Of the seven figures in the most resolved of the compositional drawings (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, R.F. 29731), only the largest in the foreground is wearing bathing trunks.[23] The others, whether wrestling, toweling themselves, or resting, are nude. Unfortunately, there are no surviving drawings from individually posed models, such as those to which Bazille referred in the first letter about the painting. For this reason, we shall never know quite why Bazille decided to dress his figures in bathing costumes, as a close examination of the painting makes clear that he did. While it was common for academic artists of the nineteenth century to study posed figures in the nude and subsequently to represent them clothed in a finished painting, I know of no other cases in the oeuvres of other artists in which figures in a Salon painting were painted nude and then "clothed" in paint. Perhaps Bazille made such a prudish decision because his last painting of a male bather, *Fisherman with a Net* (fig. 52), had been completely nude and had been rejected by the Salon jury in 1869.

Fisherman with a Net contrasts fascinatingly with *Summer Scene*. It, too, was created as a pendant to a genre portrait of a woman.[24] In the earlier pairing, Bazille evidently intended that his two identically sized vertical canvases (the other, *View of the Village*, is in the Musée Fabre in Montpellier) would both be accepted by the Salon jury; perhaps he also hoped that, for reasons of their identical size and the reverse directionality of their compositions and imagery, they would be hung to the left and right of a central

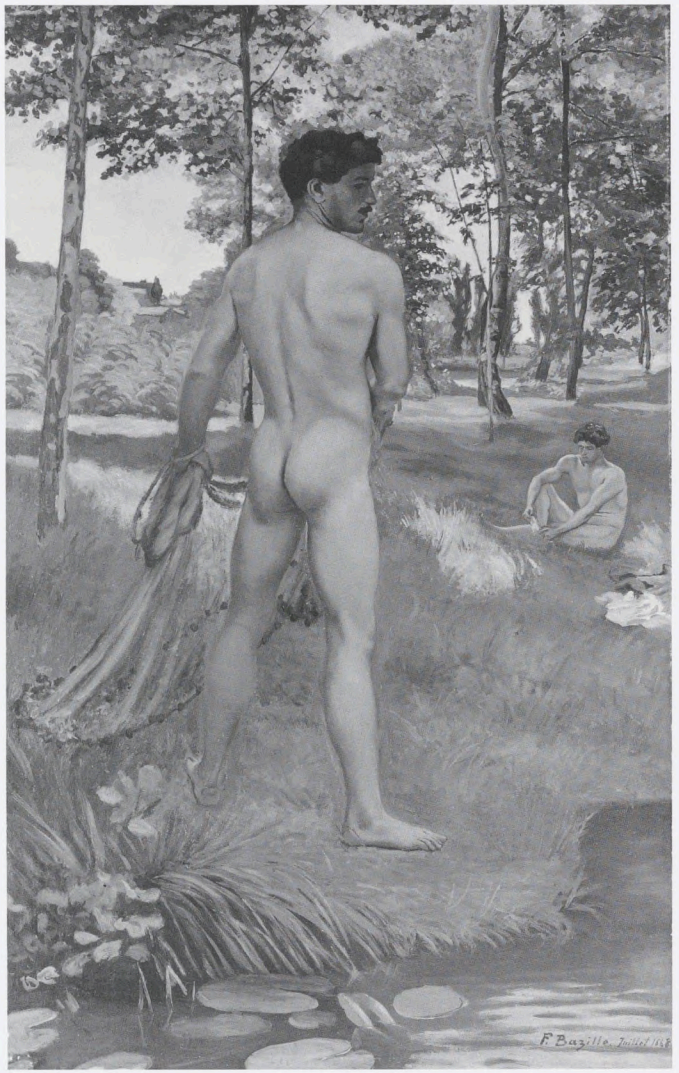


FIG. 52. Frédéric Bazille, *Fisherman with a Net*, 1868, oil on canvas, 54 x 34 in., Fondation Rau pour le Tiers-Monde, Zurich

painting at the midlevel of the wall. The seated woman was much admired by the jury, but they rejected the male nude, and their reasons, though never stated, must surely have involved the ambiguously erotic nature of Bazille's representation.[25] Although posed as a fisherman in a manner familiar to students of classical sculpture and represented from the back, without offending genitalia and pubic hair, Bazille's figure is clearly an actual man, whose back, buttocks, and profile head were painted with a sensuousness that must have been too much for the jury. For that reason, the powerful binary tension between a standing nude man in an active pose and a seated, clothed woman in a passive pose—which Bazille surely intended in this pairing—was never realized in his lifetime.[26] What is surprising, even shocking, about the pairing is that the nude male is erotic and the seated female is chaste, thereby reversing the norm.

The overt eroticism of Bazille's *Fisherman with a Net* places the beholder of the painting in an awkward, ambiguous situation. We have no choice but to gaze at this centered and posed figure, and the placement of that figure in a real landscape with houses and an equally nude and equally inaccessible companion in the middle ground signifies contemporary reality, adding further to the psychic confusion of the beholder. As viewers of paintings, we would have no such problems with an identically arranged male nude were he set in a classicizing landscape with Roman buildings. What is radical about *Fisherman with a Net* is that, while it retains classicism in the pose of its central figure, it jettisons precisely the aspect of the classical tradition—an archaeologically conceived setting—that allows the beholder to be distanced from the figure.

Measuring Bazille's intentions here is as difficult as deciphering those of Eakins in painting *Swimming*, and the inherent ambiguity of both pictures—their uneasy contemporaneous classicism—is their most compelling feature. Each denies the existence of the beholder because each describes a self-sufficient and internally closed world. At the same time, each painting

possesses a real contemporaneity because of the temporal and, hence, physical proximity of the subject. Each also plays with notions of "the classical" in the posed quality of the figures and in the balance and coherence of the pictorial field. Bazille's painting contains perhaps a greater element of risk through its inclusion of domestic architecture in the middle ground, suggesting by this that the scene is not located in a physically remote setting. This, when one remembers that Bazille's painting was set in his native Provence, is proof that the painter made conscious links between classical civilization and its derivative in modern Provence. Surely Eakins had a similar intention in painting *Swimming*, with its clearly classical, even pedimental composition that also encourages viewers to leap from the world of the Mediterranean ancients to a successor civilization near Philadelphia, the cultural capital of the modern United States.

Yet, fascinating as the connections are between *Fisherman with a Net* and *Swimming*, there are no direct links between the paintings.[27] Instead, the actual visual history of Eakins' masterpiece is through Bazille's larger and more complex *Summer Scene* (fig. 53). The figures in Bazille's painting are arranged in three distinct planes that recede into space. Their setting, a meadow surrounded by birch trees and bordered by a pool, is placed within the agricultural landscape of western Provence, where the painter's family lived. In spite of the unity of the landscape setting, the figures are treated separately and placed in the setting in ways that emphasize their discontinuities. The full-scale figure in the left foreground has often been linked to figures of St. Sebastian, the male body that seems to be the site of the greatest homoerotic fantasizing in Christian art.[28] He leans against the scarred trunk of a birch tree, seeming to shrink from both the water and the sun, his eyes downturned and lost in thought. The strong shadows of the model's legs heighten our sense of his physicality, while the opened fingers of his hand resting on the tree clearly signify tactility. If he is "dry" and placed mostly in the sun, the other two bathers in the foreground are both immersed in the cool, shaded water of Bazille's pool, and their degrees of immersion clearly contrast. The central figure seems literally to have emerged from the water, and only his shoulders and head are in air. Of all the figures, he seems most like a boy or an adolescent, and his evident youth actually alters our reading of the painting. What at first appears to be a group of young male friends on an outing gradually becomes a group of young men, who may or may not be together, sharing the field and the pond with a boy. The very discontinuity among the figures strengthens an interpretation of shared rather than collective activity, and the fact that they are not nude, but wearing swimming trunks, gives the setting the quality of a quasi-public place.

The figure who emerges from the pool with the help of a partially clothed friend is the oddest and most disconcerting of the entire painting. This figural group seems to have been added to the composition during the summer months of 1869, after the compositional drawing was completed, and its effect on the composition is to activate it and to disperse its energies. The figure with one leg in the water is of an unparalleled awkwardness. No similar figure comes to mind in the entire history of Western art, and certainly not in the numerous representations of the Baptism of Christ that such a pairing of male figures might suggest. Only in some of the complex figural theatrics associated with various Descents from the Cross or in multifigural groupings of purgatory or hell can one find anything comparable, though not directly analogous.

Only one of the main figures in *Summer Scene* (the boy immersed in water) would, if unclothed, be as decorous as the central male figure in *Fisherman with a Net*. Every one of the seven remaining figures would have exposed genitalia, and, to make matters even more uncomfortable, most of the figures are placed in the immediate foreground of the composition, where their position with respect to the beholder does not allow for many forms of "distancing." Fortunately, Bazille helps us by clothing all of these figures in



FIG. 53. Frédéric Bazille, *Summer Scene*, 1869, oil on canvas, 62 x 62⅜ in., The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, gift of Mr. and Mrs. F. Meynier de Salinelles

bathing trunks and by creating a situation in which none of them engage the beholder and only a few engage each other. This dispersal of gazes—both internally and externally—is one aspect of the painting's complex aesthetics. It is as if Bazille anxiously presents a summer scene of almost unparalleled physicality and immediacy and then, as if afraid of his very achievement, pulls the scene apart into various disconnected subscenes, each independent of the others. The mental and physical worlds of each figure or figural group are juxtaposed rather than unified, resulting in a work of art of perplexing discontinuity.

The very effect of this painting is to force the beholder to gaze separately at each figure and, thus, to do something in looking at the painting that one would not do in life—to gaze for some time at contemporary nude or partially clothed male figures. Indeed, young men who swim, wrestle, and sun together out-of-doors are permitted to touch each other only in forms of combat or support and are never encouraged actually to look at one another. In this painting, the beholder is placed in the awkward situation of being a voyeur of a scene that, through representation, raises challenging questions about the beauty of the actual male body. Even the earliest commentators about the painting noted certain quotations from old-master painting, quotations that seem to have been cited to give a certain aesthetic validation to the scene. One source, as has been noted, was a religious image of a beautiful, young martyred saint. The adjacent reclining figure has been identified with the river god in Raphael's *Judgment of Paris*, engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi (the source for Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*), and with a more compellingly similar figure in a landscape by Laurent de la Hyre, which Bazille saw in his hometown museum, the Musée Fabre in Montpellier.[29] The wrestling figures surely derive from a more immediate source, Courbet, who knew Bazille and had actually visited his studio. And the others seem not to have had sources in works of art or reproductions of them but were derived from observing—and then probably reposing—actual figures either in Paris or, in the case of the pair of figures on the right, in Provence.

The only scholar to confront directly the issue of homoeroticism and Bazille was Kermit Champa in his review of the 1978 Bazille exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago. Although the more frankly erotic *Fisherman with a Net* was not then available for loan, Champa recognized *Summer Scene* as a signal to the world—perhaps an unconscious signal—of the painter's homosexual tendencies. His words bear quotation, not because he presents any basis in written documents, but because they are among the few frank—and frankly sexual—interpretations of a major modern painting as homoerotic:

> Like Courbet, Bazille responds both to the titillating fact of pictured nudity and the secondary voyeuristic excitement of watching pictured titillation. Since Bazille's preferences were pretty clearly oriented more toward men than women, it is not surprising that *Summer Scene* is much richer in innuendoes than *Toilette* [the orientalist female nude rejected by the Salon jury in 1870]. Further, if one can imagine the image without bathing suits (at least some of which are later retouches, I currently suspect, pending X-rays of the canvas) the range of innuendo becomes positively alarming. Bazille . . . had in *Summer Scene* approached a conceptual and psychological shadowy area, bordered on one side by fact and on the other by personal fantasy purporting to be external fact.[30]

Although this is certainly possible, one might even say likely, there is no actual evidence beyond the painting itself to support this view. And in an age in which verbal documentation is crucial to the establishment of art-historical proof, this purely visual analysis is, perhaps, insufficient. Yet one suspects, given the pictorial context in which *Summer Scene* is set, that Champa is correct. Like most young artists in the nineteenth century, Bazille cut his teeth by representing the nude model, mostly male, and then turned to representing the nude woman. His first major painting of a nude, the full-scale *Sleeping Nude* of 1864 (Musée Fabre, Montpellier), is absolutely the opposite of Manet's realist nudes in its exploitation of the naked female. Because

the woman appears to be sleeping, with her arm covering her nose and eyes, she has no individuality or character. She is simply a body, indecorously placed on the floor of a Parisian studio. How different she is from Renoir's or Manet's nudes, who are clearly actual women and who, in certain cases, aggressively engage the viewer in a kind of aesthetic dance by making eye contact. For Bazille, this was either an undesired aesthetic stance or, for deeper psychological reasons, impossible for him to picture. Indeed, all of his female characters are remote and inaccessible to the viewer, either in the company of other women or completely clothed. And, when one compares the female with the male nudes, it is clear that most of Bazille's erotic energy went into the fantasist rendering of the male.

Here, one confronts the central problem in interpreting Bazille's painting—and also the central reason why, despite the numerous stylistic differences between it and Eakins' *Swimming*, it is so clearly the prototype for Eakins' experiments in the mid–1880s. No earlier painting known to Eakins had the same combination of sublimated or fantasist homoeroticism and sheer realism as Bazille's oddly unsatisfying painting of 1869–70. Eakins was, in many senses, ready for Bazille's painting at the Salon of 1870, but in other, more profound, senses, he needed more than a decade before he could himself find a situation in which his life experiences, a commission, and his teaching could free him enough to represent the nude male in a contemporary setting.

In fact, the examples of Delacroix, Manet, and, more immediately, Bonnat allowed Eakins first to represent the male nude as the crucified Christ. This painting (see pl. 5), one of a long series of representations of the nearly nude Christ, could not be shocking simply because of the nudity of the figure. The relative moral "safety" of this condition allowed Eakins to deal with the nude male subject in relative freedom. However, it was only with the Coates commission, discussed so fully by Doreen Bolger, and with his seemingly unassailable position with his students that Eakins found a situa-



FIG. 54. Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Boy with a Cat*, 1868–69, oil on canvas, 48⅝ x 26¼ in., Musée d'Orsay, Paris, © photo R.M.N.

tion in which he could treat the contemporary male nude in the manner of Bazille.

Many scholars have worried about the meanings of Eakins' male nudes, turning, as early as Hendricks in 1974, to a consideration of the painter's own sexuality as the possible explanation for the painting, but few students of European art have made similar efforts to explain the male nudes of Courbet, Degas, Bazille, Renoir, Cézanne, Caillebotte, and Gauguin. Of course, no one could even utter the word *homosexuality* in a discussion of Courbet, Renoir, or Gauguin, but, in point of fact, the sexual practices of none of the other artists are clearly established, and, as is evident from a close reading of Gauguin's texts, even this fabled heterosexual was not immune from homosexual impulses. We know from Whitney Davis' complex and sophisticated interpretation of the homoerotic—or rather, homosocial—content of Eakins' nudes of the 1880s that an artist's actual sexual practice and what Davis inelegantly calls the "discharge" of desire through picture making are two different things, and this might well be the case for other artists whose private lives remain private despite the invasive tactics of modern historians.[31]

There is, however, a wonderfully mysterious and powerful male nude that must enter the discussion at this point, Renoir's provocative *Boy with a Cat* (fig. 54). This seemingly shocking painting entered the Musée d'Orsay only in 1992, before which it was largely unknown and unreproduced. It made its public debut in the *Origins of Impressionism* exhibition in Paris and New York, and Henri Loyrette's entry in the catalogue made every effort to minimize the odd and ambiguous sexuality of the painting. Since *Boy with a Cat* was never exhibited in the nineteenth century, it has the status of a private painting. It represents a standing, nude adolescent boy, seen in a sort of vertical hermaphrodite pose, fondling a cat that sits on an altar-like table elaborately draped with floral-printed satin. The entire painting is a pictorial apotheosis of the sense of touch, made all the more bizarre because the sexual object to be touched is a standing boy rather than the conventional reclining girl or woman. The picture would not be so relevant here were it not for the fact that its first—and only—French owner was Edmond Maître, Bazille's closest friend. This, together with the well-known link between Renoir and Bazille in the second half of the 1860s, suggests that the painting may even have resulted from a private commission on the part of Maître. We learn from Douglas Cooper, who came to know the family of Renoir's friends, the Le Coeurs, that the model was the son of the important architect Charles Le Coeur, a perfectly upstanding person who, in Loyrette's words, was "unlikely" to have "permitted such a portrait."[32]

If the father was ignorant of the painting's existence (hardly credible, given the age of the boy), and if the painter was unlikely to have created the conditions for this picture on his own, how does one explain a painting of a beautiful young boy, who looks coyly at the viewer while petting a cat? Perhaps the big question to ask here has to do with the origins of the picture's unconventionality. Does the painting reflect the ambiguous homoerotic yearnings of Renoir (unlikely) or does it tell us more about its first owner and possible patron? At this stage in our knowledge of Maître (whose marriage in 1869 left Bazille temporarily bereft), it is difficult to call the painting "patron driven," particularly because we do not know when Maître acquired the picture and, therefore, whether it was "commissioned."[33] Still, its very oddness in Renoir's oeuvre suggests that the painting emerged from discussions that involved Maître and possibly Bazille, both of whom may have urged Renoir to paint a male nude like *Boy with a Cat*. Indeed, the model has a startling similarity to the figure of the boy in the water in *Summer Scene*, suggesting that Bazille could have worked with Renoir in 1868–69. Bazille surely knew Renoir's *Boy with a Cat* and may even have arranged either the commission or the sale, and stylistic evidence suggests that it was painted at the same time as *Fisherman with a Net* and perhaps even the early stages of *Summer Scene*.



FIG. 55. Paul Cézanne, *Bathers at Rest*, 1875–76, oil on canvas, 32¼ x 39⅞ in., The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania

These encounters of Bazille, Renoir, and Maître, when combined with Bazille's personal knowledge of Courbet, created all the necessary conditions under which Bazille could actually conceive of and execute an ambitious, but ambiguous, Salon painting of male nudes. And, one must also remember that Bazille was close to Cézanne, who, although he had not yet painted any of his canvases of male bathers, had already begun to fantasize about his own youthful excursions with Émile Zola and others in the countryside around Aix.[34] The fact that these two young men—Bazille and Cézanne—were from Provence, wealthy, and struggling to define both their profession and their personal lives, all the while maintaining strong links with their families, created another bond that can, in many senses, explain just why Bazille decided to paint a Salon painting of male nudes and to pair it with what he expected to be a more socially acceptable painting of a female nude in an appropriately distanced orientalist context. Although the entire canvas of *Summer Scene* is full of suppressed erotic tension, the only erotic twinge that one receives from *The Toilette* is of a racial sort, the superbly painted white hand of the central nude that rests complacently on the dark brown shoulder of a model of African origin. Not even Gauguin dealt so frankly with the sexuality of race, and no painting until Émile Bernard's failed multiracial pornographic machine of 1899 (*Les Trois Races*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art) matched this one in its hothouse lesbian atmosphere. As with Cézanne's mature oeuvre, no nude men are allowed by Bazille into a painting with women, and the converse is also true.

After Bazille's premature death in the Franco-Prussian War, he became a minor hero for the avant-garde, but in little more than a year he was forgotten as the young men and women reconvened after the war and the Commune to form the group of independent artists known today as Impressionists. Yet, Bazille's last major painting had a long afterlife. Indeed, it can be argued that *Summer Scene* is the first of a group of paintings that includes not only Eakins' masterpiece of 1884–85 but also Cézanne's male bathers.[35] It is surely no accident that, when Cézanne participated in the third Impressionist exhibition in 1877, he chose to represent himself not merely with a group of wonderful landscapes and still lifes (which we would expect), but with a large, contrived classical painting he called *Bathers; Study, Project for a Painting*, now known as *Bathers at Rest* (fig. 55).[36] This work must have looked awkward and out of place in the same room with Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette* (1876, Musée d'Orsay) and Morisot's *Head of a Girl* (Lewyt Collection, New York). Whereas Renoir and Morisot treated the figure with a gentle lyricism and an easy, socially acceptable sensuality, Cézanne posed four intensely gawky figures in a vast Provençal landscape.

Painted with thick, viscous patches of color, Cézanne's earliest completed male bather composition has all the "southern" optical intensity of its prototype, Bazille's *Summer Scene*. Brilliant greens, yellows, and blues dominate the painting, and even the flesh is filled with colors—yellows, pinks, salmons, reds, lavenders. The figures share with those of Bazille a disconnected quality, as if each were separately observed, transcribed, and, finally, placed in the composition. In analyzing them, writers have tried to find prototypes in the history of art, with candidates for sources ranging from Michelangelo to Gérôme and including sculpture as well as painting.[37] Yet, in each case, Cézanne consumed the appropriated source so completely that its identity is lost in the final work. In this case, Cézanne's masterpiece differs from its major source, Bazille's *Summer Scene*. Indeed, the general sources of Bazille's figures—St. Sebastian, a reclining river god, Courbet's *Wrestlers*—are so obvious that a visually literate viewer recognizes them with no real effort. For Cézanne, as for Eakins after him, the sources for the poses are not nearly so apparent, and the fact that the painting seems to have had no clear sources is part of its stubborn originality. What is most surprising about this situation is that, while Bazille's figures wear their sources almost as forthrightly as they wear bathing costumes, his painting has a much more immediate contemporaneity than do the "classical" concoctions of either Cézanne or Eakins. In both cases, this classicism has two components—the first relates to the balanced and figurally oriented compositions of each work, and the second has to do with the relative absence in Cézanne and the absolute absence in Eakins of contemporary clothing.

It is clear that, for both Eakins and Cézanne, Bazille's *Summer Scene* had opened the door for their later—and independent—investigations of the male nude out-of-doors. Each of them brought different training, temperament, and psychology to the task of transcribing the contemporary male nude, but each clearly had a compelling need to do so. For Cézanne, that need continued throughout the remainder of his life, and there are at least thirty-three painted compositions that deal with the male nude—alone and in various groups—out-of-doors. These compositions are balanced by an equal number of female bather compositions, three of which are of very large scale. In fact, Cézanne's interest in the male bather seems to have remained steady from the mid–1870s, when he first turned to it, until his death in 1906. Conversely, his interest in the female bather increased in the years around 1900, when he worked on three very large works (now in the Barnes Collection, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the National Gallery, London) that have often been read as a kind of pictorial summation of his oeuvre. Interestingly, the most perfectly resolved, the largest, and the most ambitious of Cézanne's male bathers, *Bathers at Rest*, is among the first of the sequence, and, in recognition of its importance, the painting was acquired by Gustave Caillebotte, probably shortly after its appearance in the 1877 Impressionist exhibition.

Perhaps the closest parallel between Cézanne's *Bathers at Rest* and Eakins' *Swimming* is that each painting has been related in the literature to the respective artist's lives. Rather than being considered as "ideal" compositions with indirect relationships to contemporary reality, both paintings have consistently been discussed in biographical terms. In Eakins' case, the practice of collective nude activity out-of-doors was a well-known part of his teaching, and, although his motivations for engaging in these activities have been interpreted in a wide variety of ways, the facts of his practice never have. For Cézanne, there has been an equal reliance on biography in "explaining" his male bather compositions. Virtually every writer in the vast Cézanne bibliography alludes to the trips into the countryside around Aix-en-Provence taken with his friends, the future novelist Émile Zola and the future physicist Baptistin Baille. The importance of boyhood memories to Cézanne cannot be altogether ignored, particularly when it comes to the male bathers. Indeed, Cézanne's first datable work of art is a drawing of

three young male swimmers under a vast tree, in a letter to Zola written in June 1859, when the painter was twenty, and his first painted nude was a large male nude executed around 1860 (Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia).[38] Zola himself referred to these naked encounters in his extraordinary—and cruel—autobiographical-biographical novel, *The Masterpiece*.[39] Yet, Cézanne's knowledge of classical literature was also great, as was his interest in the Arcadian compositions of Poussin, suggesting that biography is only one strand in many that led to the creation of these works of art. We must remember that Cézanne was in his late thirties when he undertook these studio subjects as a kind of antidote to the rigorous kind of painting *en face de la motif* on which he, like his mentor and friend, Pissarro, insisted.

It would be fascinating to see Bazille's *Summer Scene* and Eakins' *Swimming* in one room—or even in one exhibition. Perhaps, then, we would understand Eakins' choice of a subject associated not with the art of his esteemed teacher, Gérôme, but with the artists that teacher most despised. The recognition of this choice would lead those of us who are Americans to understand the double ambivalence of Eakins as a painter. He was, at once, the first revolutionary force in American figure painting since Copley and a painter who, perhaps because he was provincial, was able to respond only belatedly—and instinctively—to the "bad" work of the most progressive artists in France. Unfortunately for our falsely national history of art, Eakins' supremely complex and difficult painting, *Swimming*, would pale if it hung next to its antisource, Bazille's *Summer Scene*. It is precisely because Eakins listened to—and understood—Gérôme that he was able to understand only the subject of Bazille's painting and was doomed forever to despise the forms, the brushstrokes, and the colors that made that subject truly revolutionary in Bazille's painting.

For Bazille and Cézanne, painting is a battleground in which subject and style—matter and manner—are pitted against each other until both either win or lose. Eakins, in spite of his much-touted innovations in representing reflections or in deriving poses and pictorial situations from photographs, was less experimental as a painter than he was as a man and as a teacher. His use of a middle-tone ground against which to paint values, his carefully balanced and centered grouping of figures, his absolute avoidance of any strong color but the green of the trees—all of these decisions link his art inextricably to that of his own teacher, Gérôme, who did more than any other artist to make sure that vanguard paintings would not be in the Salon. When Gérôme lost in 1870, Eakins benefitted enormously from the very sight of Bazille's bold—and aggressively unsatisfactory—painting. Unfortunately, when he himself turned to the same subject in *Swimming* in 1884 and 1885, he remembered only the subject and not the style of this important source.



FIG. 56. Georges Seurat, *The Bathers at Asnières*, 1882–83, oil on canvas, 78½ x 117 3/16 in., The National Gallery, London

Arthur Danto, our American philosopher of art, has recently written a provocative short essay about the parallels between Eakins' *Swimming* and Georges Seurat's *Bathers at Asnières* (fig. 56).[40] The comparison is far less real—and less interesting as a result—than that between the Eakins and the French paintings that were the actual sources—and antisources—of his work. Yet, in another way, Danto is correct: both Eakins and Seurat were equally "academic" in their conception of painting. Seurat's academic experience was as important for his art as was his well-known (but later than the *Bathers*) friendship with Cézanne and Signac. Eakins, like Seurat, tried to have it both ways, and the entire history of modern art has taught us that one can never succeed by trying to have it both ways. Eakins thought that photography would free him from Gérôme as Seurat thought that color theory would free him from both the Impressionists and the academy, where he felt more at home. Both tried too hard to reconcile too much, and, as their respective bathers look forever sideways, parallel to the picture plane that is, for us, a barrier, we as viewers are reminded that we will never know just what it is that fascinates them. For each artist, the male bathers are contrived to gaze outside of the picture that frames them. What do they see?

NOTES

1. Gordon Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974), p. 64. For more detailed treatment of Eakins in Paris, see Kathleen A. Foster, "Philadelphia and Paris: Thomas Eakins and the Beaux-Arts" (Master's paper, Yale University, 1972).

2. Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins*, p. 14.

3. The word *modern* is here used in the "old-fashioned" sense to connote vanguard or anti-academic painting from 1850 to 1940.

4. The most eloquent and difficult discussion of Manet's nudes can be found in T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1984).

5. The most convenient collection of this enormously rich bibliography can be found in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Gerrard (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). Linda Nochlin's lectures and essays (see *Bathtime: Renoir, Cézanne, Daumier and the Practices of Bathing in Nineteenth-Century France* [Groningen: Gerson Lectures Foundation, 1991]) have rigorously analyzed the ubiquitous female bather in nineteenth-century French art, with its manifold social, psychological, and moral meanings. She has neglected nothing—scientific texts on bathing, hygiene, and athletics, as well as poetry, novels, and moral treatises—to create a verbal discourse for images that range from obscure and unphotographed academic paintings to well-known works by Manet and Renoir.

In most of this literature, men are scarcely mentioned, except reproachfully as the intended viewers for these supremely sexist works. Only Manet is spared the critical contempt of modern feminist critics, mostly because, through controlling the female gaze, he rendered the male viewer self-conscious to such an extraordinary degree that his intention must have been to instill guilt in his well-stuffed bourgeois viewers. Unfortunately, in the absence of Manet's words, we will never know the precise nature of his intentions.

6. This essay will concentrate on the part of that tradition that bears immediate comparative impact upon an understanding of Thomas Eakins' *Swimming*. A full treatment of the subject is the proper subject of a dissertation and/or book.

7. To my knowledge, the only modern exhibition in which the subject of male bathing or the male nude in modern art has played any strong role was the *Cézanne Bathers* exhibition of 1988 in Basel.

8. The liveliest recent discussion of this painting that includes all earlier interpretations is Norma Broude, "Edgar Degas and French Feminism, ca. 1880," in *The Expanding Discourse*, pp. 269–280.

9. See Charles S. Moffett, "Disarray and Disappointment: The Fifth Exhibition, 1880," in

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The New Painting: Impressionism, 1874–1886 (San Francisco: The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1986), pp. 299–301.

10. This curious painting was recently purchased by the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and included in *The Origins of Impressionism*. Interestingly, its first owner was Bazille's best friend, Edmond Maître.

11. The most recent discussion of this provocative painting can be found in Gloria Groom's entry in the exhibition catalogue *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist* (New York: Abbeville, 1995), pp. 216–217. Interestingly, two feminist scholars have recently discussed the erotic—or homoerotic—content of this painting. Tamar Garb provoked an audience in a recent lecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, while Julia Bernard took such notions into print in a fascinating article, "Impressionism: Boys' Club," in *Text sur Kunst* 5, no. 17 (February 1995): 168–173.

12. The painting made its most recent appearance in Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), where it was discussed both in the lengthy essay on representations of the nude by Loyrette (pp. 95–123) and in an exemplary entry by Tinterow (pp. 334–335).

13. This canvas, *La Toilette*, is now in the Musée Fabre in Bazille's hometown of Montpellier.

14. The meeting is recorded in a letter Bazille wrote to his parents. Bazille's father was involved in the acceptance by the town of Montpellier of the gift of the Bruyas Collection in 1869. The Bruyas Collection was the single most important holding of Courbet's works then in private hands and was well known to the young painter. See *Frédéric Bazille: The Prophet of Impressionism* (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1992), p. 161.

15. The most accessible of the numerous discussions of the French art world before and after the Franco-Prussian War can be found in Paul Tucker, "The First Impressionist Exhibition in Context," in *The New Painting: Impressionism, 1874–1886*, pp. 93–117.

16. Unfortunately, only the titles of works in the catalogue can help us to identify other male nudes in the Salon exhibition in 1870, and these are notoriously unreliable as proof. However, due to the prominence of Bertall's caricature of Bazille's painting in *Le Journal Amusant*, we can safely assume that it was the most visibly controversial of these works. Others would have been representations of Christ, St. Sebastian, or one or more classical heroes in battle.

17. Zacharie Astruc, "Le Salon de 1870," *L'Écho des Beaux-Arts*, June 12, 1870, pp. 2–3; Edmond Duranty, "Salon de 1870," *Paris-Journal*, May 19, 1870, p. 2.

18. For an accessible reproduction of this cartoon, see the exhibition catalogue *Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, p. 50.

19. Gerald Ackerman's path-breaking essay, "Thomas Eakins and His Parisian Masters Gérôme and Bonnat," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (April 1969): 235–256, first analyzed Eakins' French training and measured its subsequent effect on his career. Barbara Weinberg first elaborated on this trend in her important study of the American pupils of Gérôme, Bonnat, and Cabanel (H. Barbara Weinberg, *The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme* [Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1984], pp. 35–47). Both of these works are excellent as far as they go, but their point of view assumes a greater degree of fidelity to teachers than is often the case in the best of students. They both also play down the relative importance of exhibitions, criticism, and the general artistic discourse at the time, preferring to concentrate on the classroom and studio instruction.

20. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, purchased this major painting by subscription in 1890. It has not been shown for more than a generation and thus plays a role as an academic male nude that, like its vanguard counterparts, has been suppressed by the modern museum and by scholarship. See Alexandra R. Murphy, *European Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: An Illustrated Summary Catalogue* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1985), p. 237. The museum also owns an oil sketch for the painting.

21. See J. Patrice Marandel, *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1978), no. 75, p. 180.

22. François Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (Geneva: Callier, 1952), pp. 76–77.

23. The most accessible photographs of the surviving drawings related to *Summer Scene* can be found in *Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, pp. 116–117.

24. The fact that the two paintings are of virtually identical size and can, for that very reason, be interpreted as a pair has never been noted in the Bazille literature. It is perhaps because Bazille's evident gamble at having both pictures accepted failed, thereby forever separating them from paired consideration. From the point of view of sex roles and the sexuality of the body, joint analysis of the paintings is considerably more interesting than the isolated discussions that have filled the literature. Too often in the literature, paintings are discussed exclusively in terms of "like" paintings, thereby rendering many aspects of their comparative meanings irrelevant.

25. The most fanatic enemy of the circle of young artists around Bazille on the Salon jury of 1869 was none other than Eakins' teacher, Gérôme. Bazille himself wrote that Gérôme called them "madmen, and declared that he felt it was his duty to prevent our paintings from appearing" (*Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, p. 112). For that reason, it is highly likely that Eakins and the other students of Gérôme were actually warned *against* the work of these

artists. I can think of no better instrument for piquing the curiosity of the young than the strong rejection by a senior authority figure!

26. The two paintings were shown together at the Bazille retrospective in 1910 and again in Montpellier, Brooklyn, and Memphis in 1992–93.

27. We know from Bazille's letter quoted above that Eakins' teacher, Gérôme, was so upset by the work of certain young artists that he did everything possible to ensure that they were rejected from the Salon. Of the rejected paintings by Monet, Renoir, Bazille, and Pissarro, *Fisherman with a Net* had the most potentially shocking subject. Did Gérôme discuss it with his students?

28. Dianne Pitman points out that Bazille had already done a drawing of St. Sebastian. She also associates both the standing and the reclining figure on the left with specific sources: a *St. Sebastian* attributed to Jacopo Bassano at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, and a *Landscape with a Shepherd Playing a Flute* by Laurent de la Hyre in Montpellier at the Musée Fabre (*Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, p. 119).

29. For a full quotation of the critical contemporary texts by Astruc and Duranty and for some additional discussions of figural sources, see Gary Tinterow's entry for the painting in *Origins of Impressionism*, pp. 334–335.

30. See Champa's fascinating review in *The Arts*, no. 10 (June 1978): 109–110. Another cryptic, but brilliant, sentence also sheds light on Bazille's imagery: "It was Bazille's anxiousness to address realist painting's most compelling and difficult issues of imagery that allowed him to run so insensitively and with such pictorial persuasiveness through its evolving intricacies of form" (p. 110).

31. Whitney Davis' "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301–341, is among the most subtle and brilliant readings in what might be called "latent iconography" in the recent art-historical literature. The only limitation of the essay is the narrowly circumscribed way in which Davis deals with Eakins' life and work, refusing to foray into analogous situations or images outside of Eakins. For a more satisfying reading of Eakins' painting, one must read Randall C. Griffin's stimulating essay, "Thomas Eakins' Construction of the Male Body, or 'Men Get to Know Each Other Across the Space of Time,'" *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 70–80.

32. See Loyrette's entry for the painting in *Origins of Impressionism*, pp. 454–455.

33. For a full discussion of Bazille's friendship with Maître, see François Daulte, "A True Friendship: Edmond Maître and Frédéric Bazille," in *Bazille and Early Impressionism*, pp. 22–30.

34. There are many discussions of Cézanne's early "bathing" outings with Zola and Baptistin Baille. Perhaps the clearest, most recent, and most accessible is found in Lawrence Gowing's brilliant essay, "The Early Work of Paul Cézanne," in *Cézanne: The Early Years, 1859–1872* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1988), pp. 4–7.

35. There are fascinating and fruitful comparisons with the Eakins in Russian and German painting of the nineteenth century, but these fall outside the scope of this essay. Perhaps the most uncanny visual parallels with *Swimming* in nineteenth-century European art can be found in a series of small paintings made in Italy around 1840 by the Russian painter Alexandr Andreevich Ivanov. These represent young boys posing in the nude in vast, almost empty landscapes. The most curious among the group is *Youths on the Shore of the Bay of Naples* in the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg. Another fascinatingly parallel painting, made in the mid–1870s in both Holland and France by the German artist Max Liebermann, is in the permanent collection of the Dallas Museum of Art. This work combines extensive quotations from classical sculpture and old master painting with up-to-date realist imagery, using the bodies of working class boys as the carriers of these lofty associations. Its presence in Dallas helps to put Eakins' *Swimming* into the larger context of modern art, rather than in the purely American context created for the painting by the Amon Carter Museum's collection. Because the Liebermann has not yet been published by the Dallas Museum of Art, information about it is accessible only in the curatorial files of the museum. An unsigned essay by this author contains a summary of this material.

36. This painting has only recently been reproduced in color and discussed in terms of the immense modern literature about Cézanne. See the brilliant entry on it by Joseph J. Rishel in *Great French Paintings from The Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post-Modernist, and Early Modern* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, in association with Lincoln University Press, 1993), pp. 102–105, and notes, pp. 300–301.

37. Ibid.

38. Both of these works are reproduced and discussed in Lawrence Gowing's introductory essay to *Cézanne: The Early Years*, pp. 4–6.

39. His idealized memories of their experience are quoted often in the Cézanne literature. Perhaps the most curious—and the most telling—instance is in Sandra Orienti's inexpensive summary catalogue of Cézanne's complete work, *Cézanne, Classics of World Art* (New York: Rizzoli, 1972), p. 99.

40. Arthur Danto, "Men Bathing, 1883: Eakins and Seurat: Both Subverted What They Believed Was the Task of Art," *ARTNews* 94, no. 3 (March 1995): 95–96.

Claire M. Barry

Swimming by Thomas Eakins: Its Construction, Condition, and Restoration

Cleaning Thomas Eakins' *Swimming* and interpreting its condition posed a daunting challenge. *Swimming* had obvious qualities as one of the artist's greatest achievements and a masterpiece of nineteenth-century American art, but disfiguring layers of varnish and overpaint hid much of Eakins' original painting—even its date—making it impossible to understand the artist's intentions. Restoration of the painting in 1993 required not only a technical examination of the painting itself but also an investigation of Eakins' general planning and working procedure, his study of optical properties and teaching methods in the mid-1880s, and reconstruction of the painting's restoration history from its exhibitions and from datable photographs. The restoration significantly transformed the appearance of the painting, revealing a subtlety and variety of surface texture and handling not previously visible, as well as the original date of the picture, 1885. It also yielded greater insights into Eakins' working procedure, including the sequence in which he painted the components and his innovative methods for painting figures and their reflections.

The goal of the 1993 restoration—to return the painting as closely as possible to its original appearance—was complicated by a number of factors. Eakins' choice of materials and working methods had resulted in marked and irreversible changes in the background, where original glazes had darkened and cracked. The painting had also been cleaned and restored on numerous occasions, and the additions of later restorers were not always easily differentiated from Eakins' own reworkings. In addition, since *Swimming* remained in Eakins' possession until his death in 1916, the artist may have reworked or repaired it in the three decades following its completion: he often reworked passages and added glazes and toned areas such as the sky to alter effects of light and atmosphere.[1] Despite the 1993 restoration, the painting's appearance remains somewhat compromised by deteriorated glazes, earlier restorations, and the passage of time. Nevertheless, with the removal of thick layers of discolored varnish, Eakins' intentions for *Swimming* can now be more fully understood and appreciated.

Close Examination of Swimming

Kathleen Foster's discussion of the artistic generation of *Swimming*—based on surviving oil sketches and photographs—can be amplified by a close examination of the painting itself. When studied intensely—with the naked eye and the stereomicroscope, or through X-radiography and infrared reflectography—the paint surface of *Swimming* tells us a great deal about Eakins' working method. We can reconstruct the order in which the artist worked on elements of the composition, deduce the means he used to achieve its convincing effects, and evaluate changes he made in this important composition as his work progressed. These traces of his working procedure, some partially obscured as the picture reached completion, can also be interpreted in light of the artist's recorded comments on technique, largely preserved in Charles Bregler's notes from Eakins' academy lectures in the 1880s.

Some clues to Eakins' thought process in developing a composition out-of-doors may be found in an early letter to his father, describing the young

artist's frustration at creating his first painting in Seville, Spain: "I had to change and bother, paint in and out. Picture making is new to me, there is the sun & gay colors & a hundred things you never see in studio light & ever so many botherations that no one out of the trade could ever guess at."[2] Written while Eakins was still a student, the letter reflects a fundamental attitude and approach to painting that remained constant throughout his work. This approach included a deep respect for natural light and color, direct observations of nature and the human figure, and a meticulous, even obsessive, attention to detail. It seems to anticipate Eakins' prolonged efforts in planning and executing *Swimming* some fourteen years later.

Eakins began *Swimming* as he had other works of the period that depict figures and animals outdoors—he blocked in the landscape, and then added the figures. In *Swimming* Eakins employed widely disparate methods of paint handling. The broadly painted, generalized background foliage was rapidly executed with thick applications of opaque greens over a brown middle tone. In *An Arcadian* (pl. 10), a work painted shortly before *Swimming*, Eakins similarly painted the landscape directly with opaque applications of color over a warm ocher imprimatura, which the artist employed as a middle tone. Eakins also used a taupe-colored middle tone in the landscape in *Arcadia* (pl. 11).

Apart from a slender tree trunk near the center of *Swimming* and occasional dabs of impasto for added highlights, the individual forms of trees or shrubs are barely distinguishable. Eakins may have borrowed from the selective focus of photography for his broadly painted foliage. He employed resinous medium in varying proportions throughout the background and also toned this area with luminous glazes which helped him to define shadows in the foliage and to set this area back in space.[3] The freely applied glazes in *Swimming* are sometimes quite thick, while others were so thinly applied that streaks, droplets, and tidelines formed as they dried. The more thickly applied glazes shrank and cracked upon drying and now appear as distracting rough patches, due perhaps to Eakins' use of an oil-resin medium, defective paint formulation, and faulty or untimely application. These types of shrinkage cracks—sometimes referred to as "scurf and scab" formation—are unique to those areas where Eakins applied dark glazes to the background foliage in *Swimming*. Drying cracks appear more frequently in areas of pure color or dark tones without admixture of white, and they may also occur when a thick coating of spirit varnish is prematurely applied to a new painting.[4] These are not present in the landscapes in *Arcadia* or *An Arcadian*, which Eakins may not have brought fully to completion.[5]

Eakins painted the blue sky of *Swimming* with broad, thickly impasted alla prima brushstrokes, leaving parts of the cream-colored ground exposed. The boundary between sky and foliage reveals the artist working wet-in-wet, with blue paint becoming loosely mixed into the green foliage. This contributes to the blurred effect of the background foliage, which appears to be slightly out-of-focus. In contrast to his soft treatment of the foliage and sky, Eakins depicted the ruins of a mill foundation in sharp focus, displaying the rough texture of the stone palpably through the use of impasto. It recalls the academy lecture in which Eakins admonished his students: "Get the texture of things."[6] In fact these rocks are among the most realistic and beautifully rendered elements in the landscape and recall his development of this detail in the preliminary oil sketches of the landscape and rocky foundation (pls. 12, 16).

Once the landscape was blocked in, Eakins scored the wet paint with a vertical line through the exact center of the canvas, where he would place the left leg of the standing figure, Jesse Godley; this line is visible under both the stereomicroscope and the infrared vidicon camera. The artist instructed his students that after finding or arranging the elements of a picture "you must notice where the middle of your field of vision is [and] fix it by some mark. . . . Then draw a vertical line down the middle of your canvas."[7] Bregler recorded this technique with a simple diagram in his notes

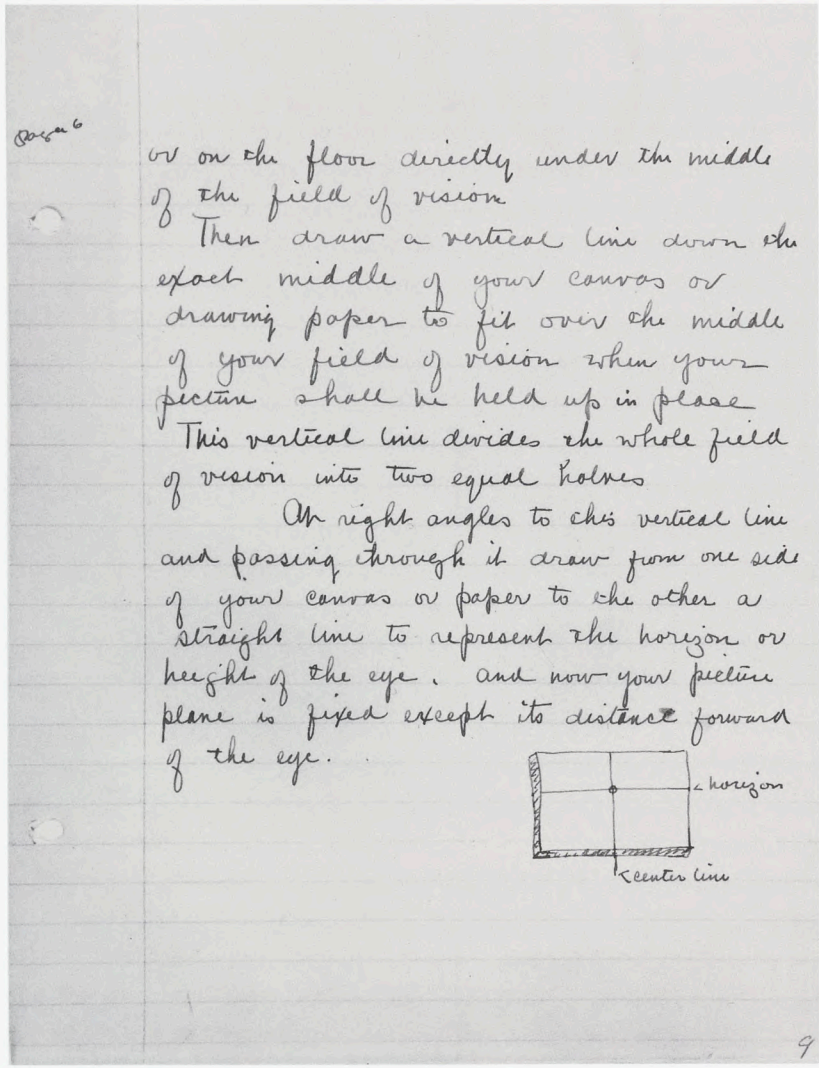


FIG. 57. *Page from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures, showing canvas with center line and horizon*, manuscript (ring binder page), 8½ x 11 in. (approx.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

from an Eakins manuscript (fig. 57). This line also determined the viewer's vantage point once the painting was completed. "A picture can be correctly looked at from one point only," Eakins cautioned, "and the spectator should have a care to place himself at that point."[8]

Another vertical line is incised along Godley's right leg, making him the only figure in the composition so bracketed. Given Eakins' teaching precepts, this figure's placement at the center of the composition, and his apparently unchanged pose and placement, it is likely that Eakins painted the figure of Godley first. There are also vertical lines along the right side of Benjamin Fox, the red-haired youth who rises up from the water (fig. 58), and running perpendicular to and below the hands of Talcott Williams, the reclining figure. These vertical lines, spaced approximately three inches apart, were scored into the ground and underlayers of paint after Eakins had blocked in the landscape but before he fully completed it. The incised lines seem to relate separately to individual figures, providing a guide for placement within the landscape and establishing a system for enlarging from photographic studies. As Kathleen Foster states in her essay, after 1880 Eakins used little preparatory drawing either on canvas or on paper, but rather used field sketches and photographic studies for guidance in developing his final composition. While the extant photographic studies for *Swimming* are few, and none of the poses in these images relate directly to the figures in *Swimming*, the existence of these squaring lines may suggest that there were other photographic studies for the figures in *Swimming* which are now lost.[9]

There are also several incised horizontal lines throughout the central area of *Swimming* (fig. 59); however, these are shorter and more narrowly spaced than the vertical lines. They do not appear to form a consistent grid for squaring, as did the graphite grids that appeared in some of Eakins' other works employing figures, such as *The Crucifixion* (pl. 5).[10] A horizontal line running through Fox's raised arm intersects at right angles with a vertical



FIG. 58. Detail of *Swimming*, showing the incised vertical lines around the figure of Benjamin Fox

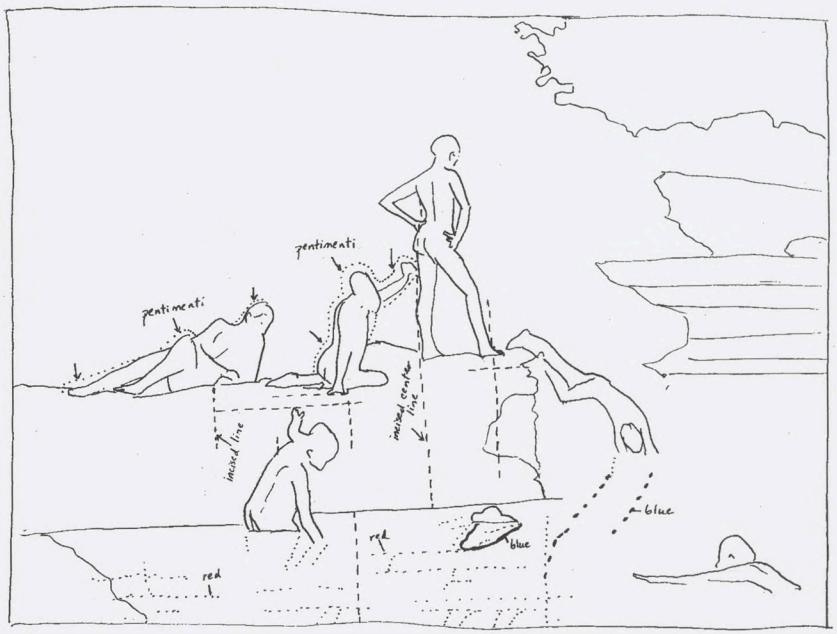


FIG. 59. Diagram of the red and blue underdrawing in the water of *Swimming*, showing Eakins' outlines of all the reflections, as well as pentimenti

line directly below the supporting arm of J. Laurie Wallace, the seated figure, though the lines around Fox are the only ones clearly visible to the naked eye. Incised into the uppermost paint layer, they suggest that Eakins painted Fox fairly late in his development of the composition.

Although the shorter, more narrowly spaced horizontal lines do not appear regularly throughout the central area of *Swimming*, additional ones may be present that cannot currently be detected by the infrared camera.[11] Interestingly, the patterns of these horizontal lines recall another diagram in Bregler's class notes, demonstrating Eakins' method for enlarging or reducing figures from a photograph or other study (figs. 60, 61). The diagram consists of a vertical line intersected at regular intervals by shorter lines drawn at right angles to it.

Once he had determined their placement within the landscape, Eakins painted the figures with small, tightly controlled strokes of paint.[12] Such short, exacting brushstrokes enabled him to add details such as musculature, blue veins in legs and arms, and pink ears and elbows—details that render the figures uncannily lifelike. Not surprisingly, the artist painted them from live models in the studio; his journal lists several payments to models for *Swimming* in the winter and spring of 1884–85, as Kathleen Foster and Sarah Cash elucidate in their essays.[13]

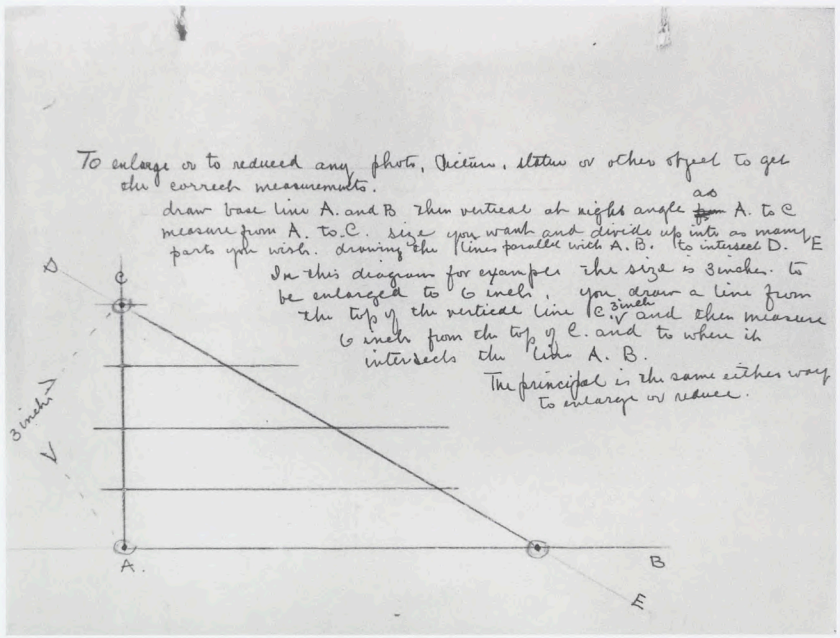


FIG. 60. *Page from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures, showing method to enlarge or reduce*, manuscript (ring-binder page), 8½ x 11 in. (approx.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

Although the figures appear almost superficially applied to the landscape, they also have a tangible presence unlike any other element in the painting, and that contributes to the heightened sense of realism in *Swimming*. X-radiography (fig. 62) revealed much about Eakins' work on the figures. He painted Godley very directly and with no changes, and may have keyed all the other figures to this one in both scale and location. Similarly, the diving figure, George Reynolds, and the swimming figure of Eakins himself are painted with the same density of pigment and show no changes.

By contrast, the three figures to the left of Godley—Williams, Wallace,

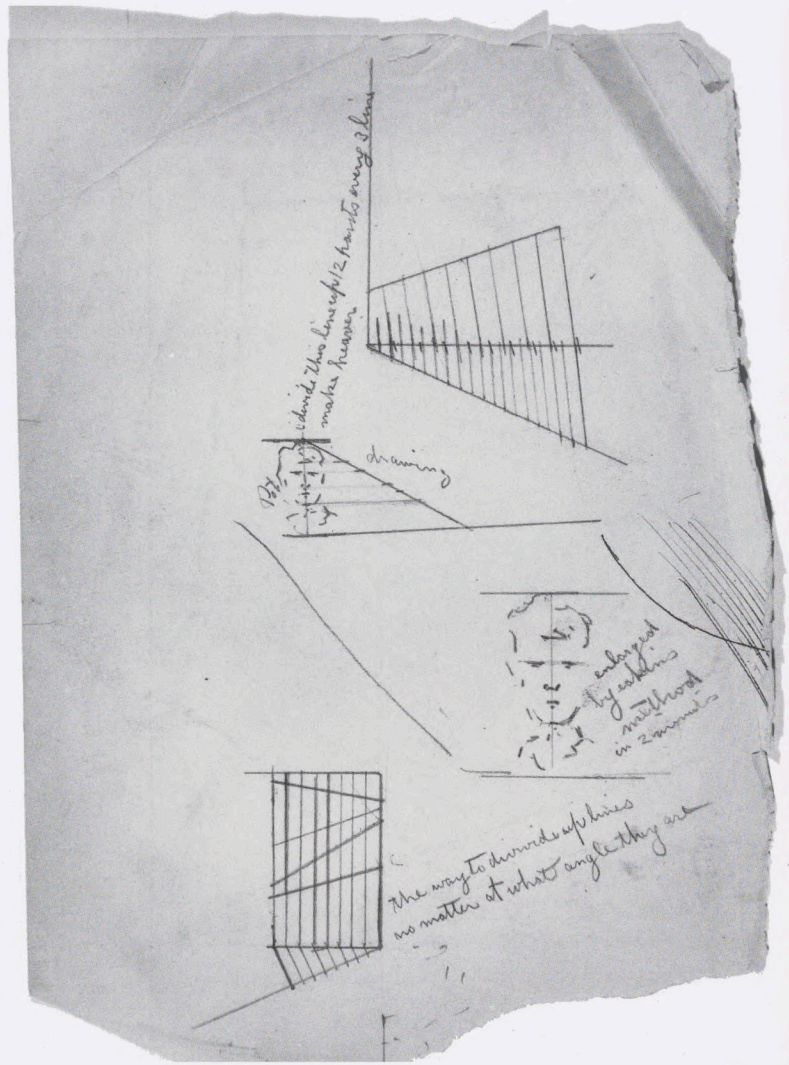


FIG. 61. *Page from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures, showing method to enlarge or reduce as applied to the human face*, manuscript (ring-binder page), 8½ x 11 in. (approx.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

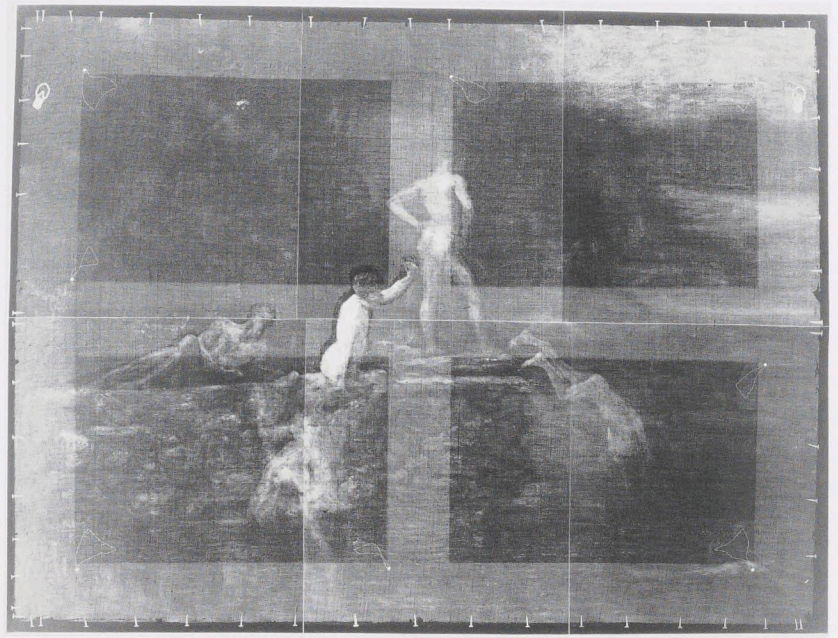


FIG. 62. This X-radiograph of *Swimming* shows dark areas where Eakins reworked his figures

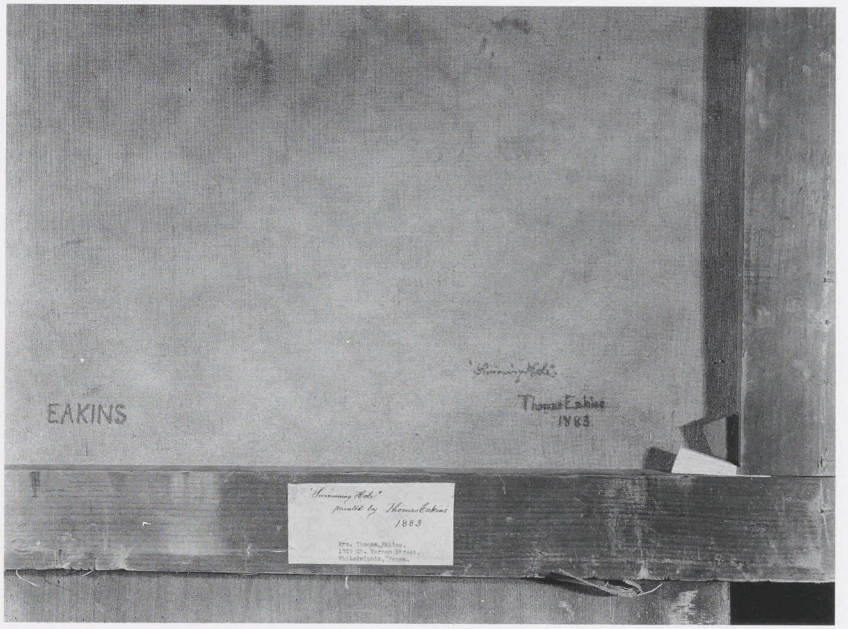


FIG. 63. The reverse of *Swimming*, photographed by Newhouse Galleries before relining the painting in 1937

and Fox—were all altered as Eakins worked on the composition. The artist shifted Wallace a quarter-inch down and a quarter-inch to the right, closer to the standing figure. The X-radiograph of *Swimming* reveals a dark halo above Wallace's raised arm, head, and along his left side—the ghost of Eakins' earlier rendering of this figure which he scraped away. The halo appears dark because there is very little pigment there, allowing X rays to pass through the painting and expose the X-ray film. By contrast, areas containing high-density pigments, such as white lead in the flesh tones, block the transmission of X rays through the painting and therefore appear as white in the X-radiograph. The X-radiograph also shows a very dark halo around Wallace, where Eakins scraped away his initial rendering of the figure. This figure's flesh tones are also applied considerably more thickly than those of Godley, Reynolds, and Eakins—the figures we know remained unchanged—further indicating Eakins' labored efforts to paint Wallace to his satisfaction. As we learn from Sarah Cash's essay on the models for *Swimming*, Wallace left Philadelphia in 1883 and returned sometime in 1885, which may also explain Eakins' need to rework this figure fairly late in the painting's development. The artist similarly moved Williams an eighth- to a half-inch farther to the right and altered his pose, pulling his left knee closer to the body, lowering his right knee, and condensing the profile of his body. In a photograph of the back of the canvas, taken in 1937, the outlines of the figures of Wallace and Williams are visible on the reverse of *Swimming*, mark-

ing where varnish or medium may have seeped through the canvas as Eakins scraped away paint to rework these figures (fig. 63). Fox was altered most dramatically. Eakins did not scrape away his initial rendering of Fox but painted a second figure directly over the first, radically altering the pose in the process. Although it is difficult to interpret the X-radiograph with complete accuracy, it appears that initially Fox was shown with his back to the viewer, reaching up to the rocks as he climbed out of the water; a corresponding figure can be seen in the Hirshhorn sketch for the picture (pl. 13).

As Kathleen Foster states in her essay, Eakins' divergence in the finished painting of *Swimming* from his compositional oil sketch is rare and may relate to the complexity of painting so many nudes in a single composition. The effect of the changes Eakins made as he painted the figures—shifting the positions of Williams and Wallace farther to the right and converting Fox's pose to a bending one—was to create a more highly charged, circular composition that emphasized the movements of individual figures engaged in the sequential acts of diving, swimming, and resting, an arrangement that endows every swimmer in the composition with equal importance.

After placing and painting the figures, Eakins continued to adjust them to the landscape, uniting them with the foliage and the ruined foundation around them. He covered over the areas where he had scraped away his earlier renderings of Williams and Wallace with green paint and refined the contours of Godley with distinct, linear strokes. He also refined Fox's contours by reworking the surface of the stones around him. As a result, some of Eakins' incised guidelines in this area are filled in with pigment, and the figures of Williams and Wallace are surrounded with visible halos of green paint where Eakins reworked the foliage around them. These halos curiously echo those visible in the X-radiograph from Eakins' earlier scraping down of this area. This reworking helped not only to clarify the contours of the figures but also to cover the marks from scraping away the earlier rendition of them. The X-radiograph also provides a picture of the sky, the sunlit

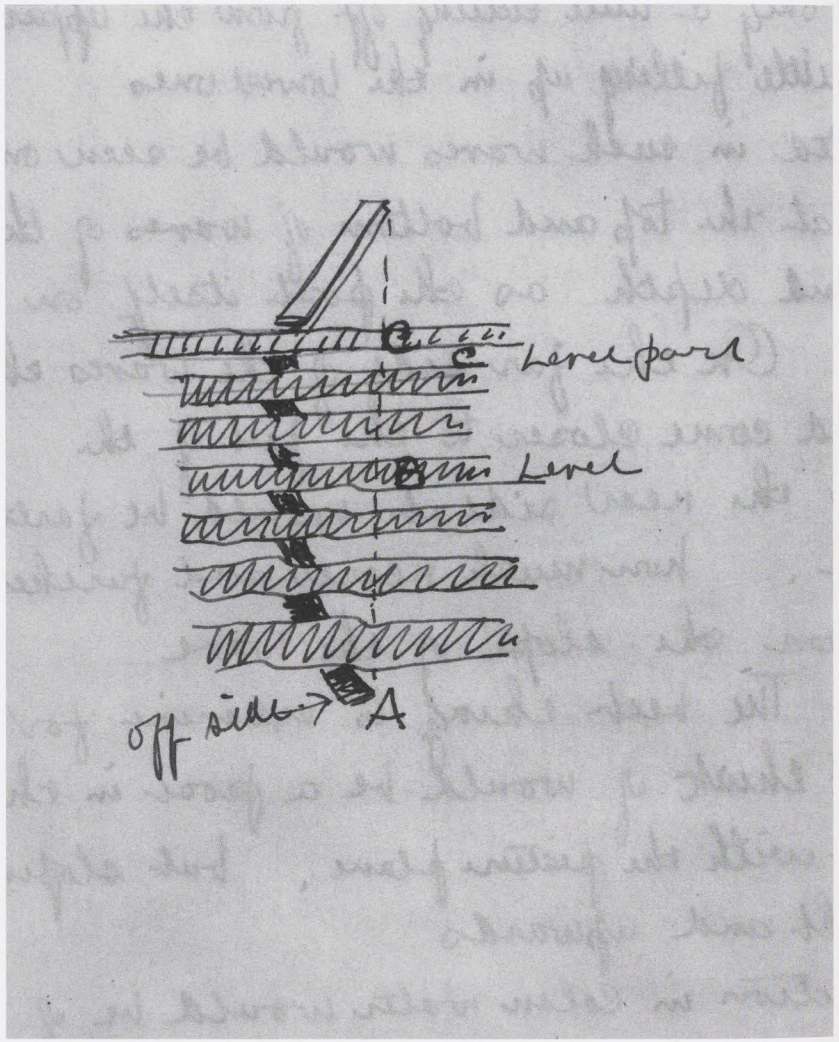


FIG. 64. *Page from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures, showing reflections broken up by agitated water or waves*, manuscript (ring-binder page), 8½ x 11 in. (approx.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

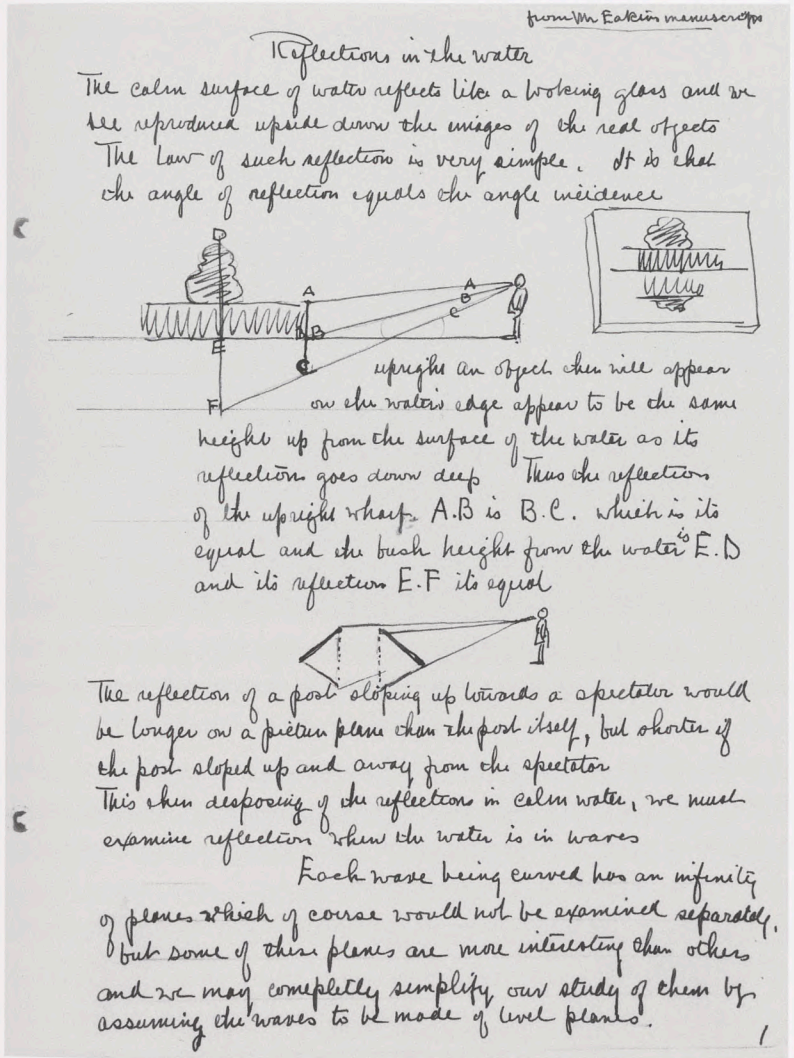


FIG. 65. *Page from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures, showing page titled "Reflections in the water,"* manuscript (ring-page binder), 8½ x 11 in. (approx.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

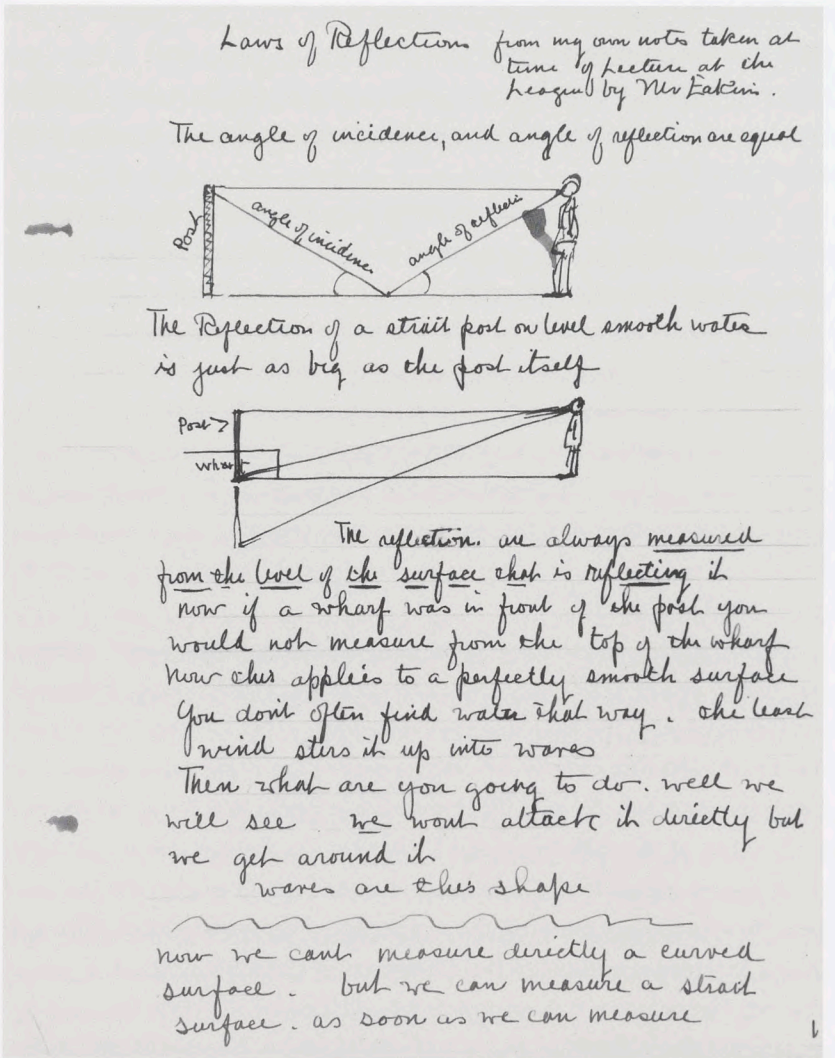


FIG. 66. *Page from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures, showing laws of reflection (angle of incidence equalling angle of reflection)*, manuscript (ring-binder page), 8½ x 11 in. (approx.), The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

meadow in the upper right, and the general outline of the foundation—all areas that the artist painted with an admixture of white lead. It is far less informative about the background foliage, which reads as a dark, formless zone because Eakins' use of that pigment here was limited to a few thick dabs of impasto.

When Eakins taught at the academy, he spoke extensively on depicting reflections in water and recommended using different colored inks to plan them accurately in agitated water (fig. 64).[14] Charles Bregler's notes from Eakins' academy lectures in the mid-1880s also include numerous "how-to" diagrams for painting reflections (figs. 65, 66). While the surface of the water in the far right background of *Swimming* is smooth, Eakins painted the water in the foreground with numerous ripples. This not only helps to suggest the movement of the swimmers but also lends an immediacy and vibrancy to their reflections. Bregler's notes thus provide insight into Eakins' thinking as he painted the water in *Swimming* and illustrate once again the artist's studied approach.[15]

The existence of extensive brush underdrawing in the water indicates that Eakins painted the water and reflections last. Examination under normal light and with the stereomicroscope confirms that he employed red and blue brush underdrawing to indicate the reflections of the main elements of the composition (pls. 21, 22). Their presence suggests that the artist planned the location of the reflections after painting the figures and upper landscape. Indeed, it would not have been possible for him to plan the layout of the reflections before painting the upper part of the composition. Although Eakins included notations of the reflections of the diving figure, dog, and climbing figure in his first oil sketch (pl. 13), he had to invent the final appearance of the reflections and water in the studio. His use of red underdrawing is more extensive than the blue. Eakins freely outlined the reflections of the bending figure of Benjamin Fox, the ankles of the standing figure of Jesse Godley, the contour of the background trees, and the entire surface of the stone foundation with red to create a mirror image of the composition's main elements. This underdrawing, now largely concealed by the uppermost paint layers, has a broken, discontinuous quality. Under magnification, these red brush notations can be seen extending beneath the grassy triangle in the lower left, showing that this area was added at a later stage (pl. 20).

The blue underdrawing seems to relate only to the reflections of the diving figure, George Reynolds (pl. 21), and the dog. In contrast to the red underdrawing, it is readily visible to the naked eye as a continuous line, suggesting that it may have come at a later stage in the development of the composition. This type of underdrawing is not visible anywhere else in the painting and undoubtedly relates to Eakins' own preoccupation with the optical effects of light on water. Certainly the underdrawing aided the artist in placing the reflections, and true to Eakins' observations on reflections, these are always accurate. As Bregler's drawings indicate, Eakins stressed that the angle of reflection must always equal the angle of incidence (figs. 65, 66).

Eakins' successful completion of this potentially difficult passage demonstrates both his skill as a painter and his considerable knowledge of optical properties. Once again, the artist altered his paint handling, as well as his focus, to depict the ripples and reflections. He painted the water itself with crisp, calligraphic brushstrokes, unique to this area of the painting, alternating color in parallel bands to capture the shimmer of light and the reflections of the figures on the surface (see pl. 21). These images appear amazingly sharp and mirrorlike—as convincingly real as the figures and the stone foundations.

Restoration History

Between the acquisition of *Swimming* by the Fort Worth Art Association in 1925 and the latest restoration in 1993, the painting had received as many as seven separate treatments, which on the whole were poorly documented.[16]



FIG. 67. *Swimming*, in one of the earliest known photographs of the painting, Getty Center, Resource Collections, Santa Monica

Given this dearth of written conservation records, the numerous restorations, and the discolored varnish layers and the inherent changes in the vulnerable background glazes, it was important to locate datable photographs documenting the appearance of *Swimming*, before and after past restorations, to understand the artist's intentions. Unfortunately, no known photographs of *Swimming* exist from the artist's lifetime.[17] Thus, we will never fully understand how *Swimming* appeared when it was first exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the fall of 1885.

The earliest known image of the work seems to be an undated photograph (fig. 67) that reveals halos around the outstretched leg and raised knee of the reclining figure, Talcott Williams, as well as the seated figure, J. Laurie Wallace. Although these halos were later covered, the X-radiograph (see fig. 62) clearly reflects these pentimenti. The photograph also suggests that Eakins extensively glazed the background, using a medium that shrank and cracked upon drying and thus appeared as rough, uneven patches across the surface. Eakins also evidently applied thin, runny glazes to the background foliage. A vertical blanched drip mark is clearly visible to the right of the standing figure, while below this can be seen several dark rivulets of dark glazing, one drip running down to the leg of the diving figure, George Reynolds.[18]

Following Eakins' death, his widow, Susan, became the painting's caretaker until its sale to the Fort Worth Art Association in 1925.[19] *Swimming* may have been among the eight pictures she sent, just before the artist's memorial exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917, to the restorer T. H. Stevenson of Philadelphia, who described himself as "Picture Renovator and Expert Restorer."[20] A glass photographic negative shot at the Metropolitan Museum on October 3, 1917, recorded the painting's condition (fig. 68).[21] A photograph from this negative shows traces of Eakins' original signature and date, records his use of dark glazes in the background foliage (which had already developed severe drying cracks), and shows the drip mark to the right of the standing figure.

The first relining of the painting, precipitated when it was dropped in transit to the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts in June 1937, was carried out by Newhouse Galleries in New York.[22] This treatment included glue relining and "resurfacing,"[23] which might describe either a simple revarnishing or perhaps a cleaning. Before the relining was undertaken, two photographs of the reverse of the canvas were made (see fig. 63).[24]

Photographs of *Swimming* after the Newhouse restoration provide additional insights into this treatment: the disfiguring drip in the background foliage was painted out, the signature was strengthened, and the date was altered.[25] Until the 1993 restoration, the resulting date on the canvas, 1883,



FIG. 68. *Swimming*, in a black and white photograph taken at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for Eakins' memorial exhibition, October 1917



FIG. 69. *Swimming* as it appeared after its 1944 restoration at Knoedler's

was assumed to be the date when Eakins began his work. However, this proved to be a conservator's misinterpretation of the actual inscription on the front—"EAKINS 1885"—which had been painted in a fugitive red lake pigment that faded to illegibility and is now visible only by magnification. The mistake is understandable, given the inaccurate inscription and label on the reverse. The signature and the date on the front were already nearly invisible as early as 1917, when the Metropolitan Museum catalogued the painting as being unsigned and undated.

In 1944, when *Swimming* was lent to an Eakins exhibition at M. Knoedler & Co., the borrower suggested that the picture already needed relining and consolidation.[26] There is no written documentation of the ensuing restoration, but its results are recorded in a photograph (fig. 69) taken in the spring of 1945.[27]

Only three years after the Knoedler treatment, the dealer proposed yet another campaign of restoration, and this was presumably carried out.[28] In the absence of detailed reports on the two Knoedler restorations, we must rely on observations made shortly afterward by the late Sheldon Keck, the distinguished conservator at the Brooklyn Museum. In preparation for his own treatments of *Swimming*, he wrote two condition reports, in 1954 and 1957, noting that the oil-resin varnish on its surface and the type of extensive filling around the edges were typical of the restoration work performed through Knoedler Gallery.[29]

Keck's two restorations are more thoroughly recorded than the two Knoedler restorations and include both photographs and treatment reports. In his 1954 treatment, Keck did not remove all the old varnish, but instead thinned the upper layers until he reached a film of oil-like varnish and then sprayed a layer of synthetic resin varnish over the surface.[30] Three years later, after additional travel, *Swimming* again showed signs of wear. The director of the Fort Worth Art Association, in anticipation of sending the painting on a five-venue tour, asked Keck to treat some "paint loss across the bottom of the picture, brought about, possibly, by the frame scraping against it when it was traveling."[31] In August and September 1957, Keck removed the old fills around the edges, restretched the painting, repaired losses, and sprayed the surface with more synthetic resin varnish.[32]

The painting continued to be lent with some regularity in the 1960s and 1970s but was never comprehensively treated, although it received some minor work at the Kimbell Art Museum in the 1970s.[33] In all, *Swimming* received seven separate treatments over the fifty years after its acquisition by the Fort Worth Art Association, including at least two relinings and as many as three cleanings.



FIG. 70. Thomas Eakins, *The Meadows, Gloucester*, c. 1882, oil on canvas, 31 15/16 x 45 1/8 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, gift of Mrs. Thomas Eakins and Miss Mary Adeline Williams

1993 Restoration

The most recent restoration of *Swimming* was carried out over a six-month period and began with an evaluation of the painting's condition (pl. 2). Several layers of discolored varnish and overpaint applied during previous restorations masked the picture's rich and varied surface, in which Eakins' brushwork ranged from the tightly controlled strokes forming the figures to a freer treatment of landscape elements. The seeming flatness of the paint surface resulted from multiple layers of varnish, resembling the rubbery thickness of linoleum. Microscopic cracks had formed throughout the surface film, producing uneven reflection of light and a dull appearance. The severely discolored oil-like varnish remained intact beneath several later applications of varnish, further obscuring Eakins' sometimes brilliant palette and contributing to the dark tonality and flat appearance of the landscape and the golden glow enveloping the figures.[34] Under ultraviolet light the layers of varnish fluoresced very strongly and appeared almost opaque, although an earlier cleaning test in the upper left background, which included the oil-like varnish, was visible. Only a few superficial retouches were indicated during this examination. Much about the painting's character—even its true state—remained concealed beneath the thick layers of varnish.

Following the examination of the painting itself came research into the artist's original intentions and how these have been compromised by past

intervention and through irreversible changes as a result of time and materials. Describing a restoration as complex as this in a narrative manner tends to condense and distort the activity, making it appear more linear and sequential than it actually was. In fact, gleaning more information about *Swimming*'s original appearance and Eakins' techniques and evaluating the impact of previous restorations on the painting's present condition were aspects of a gradual and synthetic process, as well as a collaborative effort, where both curators and conservators who had studied or treated other works by Eakins provided essential information and insights. The early photographs of *Swimming*, supplied by the Metropolitan Museum and the Getty Center, were useful in documenting certain changes in the painting over time, but since they were black and white and often had been printed from old negatives, the information they provided had to be weighed against other sources.

A firsthand examination of two of Eakins' oil sketches for the subject (pls. 15, 16), his sketchbox, and palette (pl. 14), as well as his related landscapes of the mid-1880s, such as *Arcadia* (pl. 11), *An Arcadian* (pl. 10), and *The Meadows, Gloucester* (fig. 70), produced a greater understanding of the artist's original intentions. Conservators who had treated these and other works by Eakins provided invaluable insights into the vagaries of Eakins' materials and painting techniques.[35] Finally, *Swimming*'s present condition was also carefully examined in the conservation studio under natural, infrared, and ultraviolet light, the stereomicroscope, and through X-radiography before treatment began.

The cleaning of *Swimming* progressed in stages, and in the first phase the overall cleaning was only taken down to the oil-like varnish layer first mentioned by Sheldon Keck. The eventual decision to remove this oil-like varnish layer was governed by the discovery of numerous old flake losses, retouches, and even overpaint beneath this layer, which were clearly visible under the stereomicroscope along the left edge and in the sky. The black overpaint along the left edge masked flake losses as well as craquelure and the damaged remains of Eakins' original glazing.

The most difficult aspect of the cleaning was distinguishing the remnants of Eakins' freely applied glazes from layers of overpaint and discolored varnish. For these decisions, the early photographs and examinations under the stereomicroscope and ultraviolet light proved invaluable. Perhaps Eakins' most vulnerable paint layers, these rich glazes in the foliage behind and around the figures had shrunk while drying and developed wide cracks, becoming glossy patches on the picture's surface. In fact, the deterioration of these glazes had most likely occurred during Eakins' own lifetime, because the severe shrinkage is clearly evident in the 1917 Metropolitan Museum photograph (see fig. 68). As this image also reveals, these glazes had been particularly sensitive to solvent action in prior cleanings, and sometimes previous restorers had resorted to masking their appearance with excessive toning. During the 1993 restoration, the patchy original glazes were protected in the final stages of cleaning with polyvinyl alcohol.

Before cleaning, the dark area of foliage behind the figures appeared as a formless opaque curtain, but as varnish layers were removed, it became more dappled, with highlights, midtones, and shadows, and the cleaning even revealed a tree trunk. The background more closely resembled the brighter tonality and dappled treatment of foliage in paintings such as *Arcadia* (pl. 11) and *An Arcadian* (pl. 10), although Eakins, through the addition of highlights and shadow, clearly brought the background of *Swimming* to a more finished state than in either of these works. While the artist sometimes applied a gray toning layer over selective areas such as the sky, he does not appear to have done so here, or perhaps this fragile layer was lost earlier in the painting's history.[36] As the removal of the oil-like varnish progressed, retouches and old flake losses not previously detected were uncovered throughout the sky, in the water, on the right leg of the standing figure, and in the upper right-hand corner.

The signature and date, which had escaped notice when the Metropolitan catalogued the painting in 1917, had been altered during the Newhouse restoration of 1937. High magnification revealed traces of Eakins' original date—1885—slightly below and to the right of the numerals 1883; the letters that formed his signature, however, were simply strengthened directly on top of the authentic signature.[37]

Some of this repaint, which proved to be insoluble, was left on the surface. The disfiguring drip mark, which had become more noticeable, as well as some of the more disrupted glazes around the figures and in the background foliage, were slightly toned, and the picture was given a more appropriate natural resin varnish. Removal of several layers of varnish and overpaint significantly transformed the painting's appearance and yielded a landscape on a summer's day, with sunlit figures much closer in tonality to the brightly colored oil studies. The cleaning uncovered relatively little significant damage, apart from the dramatic deterioration of background glazes by the time *Swimming* was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum in 1917. The surface of the painting had also been flattened slightly in relining, but as successive layers of varnish were removed, the variety and richness of Eakins' brushwork became more apparent.

The final stage of the 1993 restoration of *Swimming* was its reinstallation in the original frame—a gilt Renaissance-revival frame which is an exceptional example of the elaborate exhibition frame popular in the late nineteenth century (pl. 3).[38] Although it is uncertain whether Eakins originally exhibited *Swimming* in this frame at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1885, the date carved into the reverse of the frame suggests that the artist selected the frame within a decade of completing the painting. Earle's Galleries, a renowned Philadelphia framemaker and art gallery, provided the venue for Eakins' first and only solo exhibition in 1896 and may be the source of the frame.[39] The frame has a flat central panel profile with a shallow cove and is decorated with several different motifs—natural foliate patterns, stylized classical patterns, and abstract ornamentation characteristic of the Aesthetic movement. It is unique in the choice of elements and the way they are combined. The original surface of the frame was a very rare and beautiful twenty-three-carat gold, with just enough silver and copper for a greenish cast, which was applied over a blue-black bole; the gilding includes both water and oil gilding.[40]



FIG. 71. Installation photograph of the memorial exhibition of Thomas Eakins' works at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1917

The frame had been removed in the mid-1970s and had been stored and forgotten at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the successor to the Fort Worth Art Museum.[41] While researching appropriate frames for *Swimming*, curators at the Amon Carter Museum contacted their colleagues at the Modern Art Museum, who used a 1928 reproduction of *Swimming* to locate the frame in museum storage and donated it to the Amon Carter Mu-

seum.[42] An installation photograph from the Eakins memorial exhibition of 1917 (fig. 71) also included *Swimming* in this frame and showed *The Writing Master* (1882, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) in an identical gilt Renaissance-revival cassetta frame.[43]

Since the artist's memorial exhibition in 1917, much of *Swimming*'s great beauty had remained hidden and misunderstood, preventing the artist's admirers and scholars of his work from appreciating and studying the painting's true character. The 1993 restoration has added to our understanding of Eakins, both in terms of how he translated his theories on painting into practice and how much effort he invested in bringing this particular picture to completion. The treatment disclosed that Eakins' subtle and sophisticated paint handling in *Swimming* was as intricate and complex as the subject itself. Most importantly, after too many years of being distorted beneath discolored varnish and overpaint, the surface of *Swimming* is now revealed in all its brilliance. Despite the changes that have occurred in the painting's appearance, the artist's intent speaks to us more directly, and Eakins' bathers can once again luxuriate in the brilliant dappled sunlight of a Philadelphia summer's day.

NOTES

My research into Thomas Eakins' painting technique and the condition of *Swimming*, as well as the restoration of the painting itself, would not have been possible without the generous support of both the Amon Carter and Kimbell museums, under the guidance of Jan Keene Muhlert and Edmund P. Pillsbury, who have supported a joint painting conservation program since 1992.

I am greatly indebted to fellow conservators and conservation scientists who shared their insights and experience with the work of Thomas Eakins and who contributed to my research on the artist, especially Mark F. Bockrath, Christina Currie, Ann Hoenigswald, Helen Houp, Perry Huston, Dorothy Mahon, Christopher McGlinchey, Dianne Dwyer Modestini, Mario Modestini, Isabelle Tokumaru, and Mark Tucker. My deepest thanks go to my colleague Michael Gallagher, whose understanding of the delicate issues involved in the cleaning of *Swimming*, as well as his sound judgement and support, guided me through the restoration of the painting and the development of this essay.

I would also like to thank the other Eakins scholars who generously answered questions and shared their time and knowledge, including Randy Griffin and Darrel Sewell. Two trustees of the Amon Carter Museum, Sherman Lee and Charles Ryskamp, also made special contributions to the cleaning and dating of *Swimming*.

For providing information on the original frame for *Swimming* I would like to thank Eli Wilner, Carrie Rebora, and William Adair. I am also grateful to those who provided bibliographic and research assistance, including Milan Hughston, Sherman Clarke, Robert Bowen, Jr., Ann Farmer, and Laura Martinez. Adam Williams and Newhouse Galleries provided copies of early correspondence regarding the restoration of *Swimming*. Tracey L. Schuster, Reference Specialist, Getty Center, and Eileen Sullivan from the Photograph and Slide Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, provided copy prints of the earliest photographic reproductions of *Swimming*.

1. Mark Tucker, paintings conservator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who has extensively examined Eakins' paintings in that collection, confirmed that this type of reworking was Eakins' frequent practice. Christina Currie, who carefully examined Eakins' *Biglin Brothers Turning Stake* (1873, The Cleveland Museum of Art), also confirmed this practice. Her technical examination of this painting was the subject of a slide lecture at the 1994 American Institute for Conservation Meeting in Nashville, Tenn: "*The Biglin Brothers Turning Stake* by Thomas Eakins: A Technical Study Reveals Surprising Techniques."

2. Thomas Eakins to his father, Benjamin Eakins, from Seville, Spain, March 14, 1870, as quoted in Kathleen A. Foster, "Realism or Impressionism? The Landscape of Thomas Eakins," in Doreen Bolger and Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., eds., *American Art Around 1900: Lectures in Memory of Daniel Fraad* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1990), p. 73 (Foster has quoted this from Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 1982], 1:57).

3. Eakins also sometimes applied varnish over his paintings and then continued to work on top of this layer. In a letter dated October 20, 1885, from Thomas Anshutz to J. Laurie Wallace, Anshutz wrote, "Dear Johnnie, We have not succeeded in solving the darkening paint question yet. Eakins has used varnish over the first painting on his portrait and it bore out the second work very well. I don't know whether it will crack or not" (Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives, Anshutz file). I am grateful to Randy Griffin for bringing this letter to my attention.

4. See Sheldon Keck, "Mechanical Alteration of the Paint Film," *Studies in Conservation: The Journal of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* 14, no. 1 (February 1969): 16.

5. There is a single figure in the foreground of *An Arcadian*, but until the picture was cleaned in the 1930s, Eakins' chalk outline on the paint surface indicated that he intended to add a second figure on top of the green landscape at the upper right of that work. Lloyd Goodrich recalled seeing that chalk outline in the upper right of *An Arcadian* when he viewed the painting at Mrs. Eakins' house: "When I first saw the painting in Mrs. Eakins' house there were sketchy chalk marks at the right which indicated that Eakins planned to add a nude male seated higher than the girl, facing her and playing pipes to which the girl would be listening" (Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:233).

6. Charles Bregler, "Thomas Eakins as a Teacher," *The Arts* 18 (October 1931): 38–40, quoted in Darrel Sewell, *Thomas Eakins: Artist of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1982), p. 89. For information on Bregler's relationship with Eakins, see "About Thomas Eakins," *The Arts* 18 (October 1931): 27. During the time that this article appeared, Lloyd Goodrich also wrote for the *Arts*.

7. Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989), microfiche ed., I/11/B/3.

8. Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, microfiche ed., I/11/A/11.

9. See also Foster's essay, note 35, where she describes the method Eakins used to enlarge a photographic study of the reclining boy in *Arcadia* to exactly the size needed for the canvas and his use of a pencil grid on the photograph to establish transfer points for painting.

10. For Eakins' use of a graphite grid in planning the composition for *The Crucifixion*, see Theodor Siegl, introduction by Evan Turner, *The Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), p. 90.

11. Infrared reflectography may reveal some but not all evidence of underdrawing or incised lines. Additional underdrawing may be concealed by opaque paint layers that prevent detection with the infrared vidicon system.

12. A former student of Eakins' student Anshutz, Dr. David Wilson, noted that Anshutz' portraits in the period 1900–1911 closely resembled those of Eakins, and he described Anshutz' method of beginning a portrait and working in flesh tones. This description may shed some light on how Eakins may have painted the figures in *Swimming*. In Wilson's letter of December 12, 1970, to Theodor Siegl, then conservator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Wilson wrote: "Anshutz taught me to begin my portrait with an outline on the canvas in burnt sienna and turpentine, and to put in burnt sienna shadows all over before doing the flesh parts in vermilion, yellow ochre and white. Eakins also used these for his flesh colors! Eakins and Anshutz after him freely used black and neutral tints" (Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives). I am grateful to Randy Griffin for bringing this letter to my attention.

13. I am grateful to Sarah Cash and Kathleen Foster for calling my attention to the entries in Eakins' journal listing these payments to models. Eakins' journal entries do not provide a conclusive record of all the modeling sessions for *Swimming*, however, since some of the models may have posed at no charge.

14. A page titled "Reflections on Water" from Charles Bregler's notes on Eakins' lectures and manuscripts is reproduced in Kathleen Foster's essay, "Eakins as a Teacher," in Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 123. For Bregler's notes on Eakins' use of colored inks, see microfiche ed., 10/F/1.

15. In these notes compiled by Charles Bregler on Thomas Eakins' lectures, it is sometimes difficult to marry Eakins' often long-winded and pedantic descriptions of reflections in his lecture notes with the naturalistic and painterly rendition of this passage in *Swimming*.

16. Restoration history, Amon Carter Museum curatorial files.

17. The painting is listed but not illustrated in the *Illustrated Catalogue of the Art Gallery of the Southern Exposition* (Louisville, Ky.: John P. Morton and Company, 1886), p. 9. *Swimming* was exhibited at the Southern Exposition with a group of American paintings including works by J. Alden Weir, Worthington Whittredge, and George Inness from August 28 to October 23, 1886. Eakins clearly wished to sell the painting and it was among the most expensive paintings included in the exhibition. It is listed as number 70 in the checklist, which reads: "THOMAS EAKINS.—*The Swimmers*. $800." The Filson Club, Incorporated, in Louisville, Kentucky, provided this information.

18. Eakins may have used megilp, an unstable material, as a glazing medium. Mark Tucker discovered several references to Eakins' and Susan Eakins' use of megilp in correspondence. Megilp is a paint medium produced by dissolving mastic resin in turpentine, with the addition of linseed oil. The resultant medium is gelatinous in consistency and has excellent working properties. It yields an enamel-like surface but becomes yellow and brittle with age. See Rutherford J. Gettens and George L. Stout, *Painting Material: A Short Encyclopedia* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 35. Mark Tucker discovered two letters written by David Wilson that refer to Eakins' possession and use of megilp. In the first letter Wilson recalls seeing megilp on Eakins' palette as the artist was painting Wilson's mother's portrait in 1908. In the second letter Wilson writes that he saw megilp "squeezed out as a curiosity" on Eakins' palette, that it had an "amber like semi-transparency," and that Eakins rubbed it into

dry places on portrait paintings between sittings. The megilp was produced by Weber Artist Suppliers in Philadelphia and consisted of gum mastic, turpentine, and Weber oil medium. Mark Tucker also referred to a letter from Susan Eakins to Frank Ireland, a Philadelphia restorer, in which she writes that she made the mistake of using megilp on a painting and requested his help in getting it off (Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives).

19. Susan Eakins lent the painting to many exhibitions across the country. Even after the Fort Worth Art Association acquired it, *Swimming* continued to be lent to numerous museums and galleries, and experienced constant wear and tear as a result. Correspondence between Fort Worth Carnegie librarian Mrs. Charles Scheuber and these venues documents these events. An incoming receipt, no. 843, for the painting (Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, June 1937), provides information about the painting's condition: "two places scratched upper-right corner; canvas very loose; canvas rotten and loose from stretcher; glass broken in two places upper-right; frame separating at all corners and chipping all over" (Richard Foster Howard, director, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, to Mrs. Charles S. Scheuber, librarian, Carnegie Public Library, Fort Worth, June 1, 1937, and Mrs. Charles S. Scheuber, librarian, Carnegie Public Library, Fort Worth, to Richard Foster Howard, director, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, June 2, 1937; Amon Carter curatorial files).

20. Susan Eakins sometimes worked on her husband's paintings, apparently before as well as after his death. According to Lloyd Goodrich, in a letter to Henry Hopkins, director, Whitney Museum of American Art, dated January 14, 1972, Susan Eakins also sometimes added signatures or the initials "T.E." to his unsigned works (Amon Carter curatorial files). In an August 1917 daybook entry Mrs. Eakins noted sending eight unspecified paintings to Stevenson (see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, microfiche ed., fiche 7, row F). This restoration would have been completed by September 28, 1917, when the Metropolitan collected *Swimming* and other paintings from her home for the exhibition. *Swimming* is recorded as Metropolitan Museum loan number 369, receipt dated September 28, 1917, ledger books, Registrar's Office, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

21. This is Metropolitan Museum of Art negative no. L 6031 B. During these early years the museum regularly made installation shots of its exhibitions on contemporary American art and often photographed individual works featured in these exhibitions.

22. Bert Newhouse, owner of Newhouse Galleries, New York, frequently visited Fort Worth, advising the Art Association and local collectors, including Amon Carter, Kay Kimbell, and Sid Richardson, among others. Unfortunately, Newhouse Galleries has no treatment records or photographs documenting this 1937 restoration, and the identity of the restorer is unknown. Mrs. Scheuber reported that Mr. Newhouse "would have it relined and put in perfect condition for us by his most skilled man, if we would send it to New York" (Mrs. Charles S. Scheuber to Sophia Ruskin, Newhouse Galleries, August 18, 1937, copy in Amon Carter curatorial files, original in archives of Newhouse Galleries, 19 East 66th Street, New York). *Swimming* was shipped to New York on August 18 and the restoration was completed with remarkable speed, by September 2 (Mrs. Charles S. Scheuber to Sophia Ruskin, Newhouse Galleries, August 18, 1937, and Sophia Ruskin to Mrs. Charles S. Scheuber, September 2, 1937, Amon Carter curatorial files). The shipment to and from New York took a week in each direction, leaving only one week for the actual work to be done. Two other letters addressed to Mr. Newhouse and Miss Ruskin dated September 9, 1937, from Mrs. Charles S. Scheuber, confirmed that the painting returned to Fort Worth safely and that the Art Association was delighted with it.

23. Bert Newhouse, Newhouse Galleries, to Mrs. Charles Scheuber, September 16, 1937 (Amon Carter curatorial files). The lining adhesive was identified in a subsequent treatment proposal (see W[illiam] H. Davidson, M. Knoedler & Co., to Mary Lake, Fort Worth Art Association, August 17, 1944, Amon Carter curatorial files). Miss Lake's correspondence to Davidson could not be located at Knoedler's.

24. One photograph reveals the outlines of the seated and reclining figures where varnish or medium may have seeped through the canvas when Eakins scraped away paint to rework these figures; this photograph is in the curatorial files of the Amon Carter Museum. It also records that the original plain-weave canvas is in good condition. A paper label was adhered to the bottom rail of the original mortise-and-tenon-keyed stretcher. At the top of this label, the words "'Swimming Hole' painted by Thomas Eakins 1883" were written in script above the typed name and address of Mrs. Eakins. The original stretcher was probably removed during the Newhouse or a later relining, and the painting is presently on an oversized four-window mahogany mortise-and-tenon-keyed stretcher.

25. In 1939, two years after the Newhouse restoration, the painting was lent to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it was photographed on March 25, 1939 (negative no. L 17630 B). This or another photograph appears in *A Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins, 1844 to 1944, Commemorating the Centennial of His Birth through June and July 1944* (New York: M. Knoedler & Co., 1944), cat. no. 32, fig. 31.

26. See *A Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins, 1844 to 1944*, cat. no. 32, fig. 31. According to William F. Davidson, the gallery's proprietor, "the present backing is attached with glue and paste and does nothing to preserve or reaffirm the adhesion between the paint film, ground and original canvas." He described the proposed treatment: "After relining, the lined canvas should be restretched on a new cabinet-made mahogany stretcher with keyed points—then the surface should be carefully unvarnished." Davidson further offered assurance that such a cleaning would be "done with the greatest care, so as not to disturb the glazes." He recommended that the work by done by an unnamed conservator—"one of our top flight men"—who had made a special study of the cleaning of Eakins' works (W[illiam]

F. Davidson, M. Knoedler & Co., to Mary Lake, Fort Worth Art Association, August 17, 1944, Amon Carter curatorial files. Copies of Miss Lake's correspondence could not be located at Knoedler's).

27. Lloyd Goodrich kept a print of this photograph in his Eakins files, where he noted that it had been taken by one "Gray, Photographer, 39 West 67th St., New York." He wrote: "Photo given to me by Knoedler after the picture was cleaned, spring 1945" (Lloyd Goodrich Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art). I am most grateful to Darrel Sewell for providing a copy print of this image at a crucial point in the painting's recent restoration.

28. Davidson's assistant, Elizabeth Clare, wrote to Sallie Gillespie, secretary for the Fort Worth Art Association, proposing the following treatment: "Fill in missing parts at bottom and top, remove scratches from surface, clean, restore and varnish" (Elizabeth Clare for W. F. Davidson, M. Knoedler & Company, July 25, 1947, to Miss Sallie Gillespie, Fort Worth Art Association, Amon Carter curatorial files). Miss Clare later acknowledged the Art Association's instructions concerning the varnish, promising to alert the gallery's restorer to "take care of the situation" (Elizabeth Clare for W. F. Davidson, M. Knoedler & Company, August 1, 1947, to Sallie Gillespie, Fort Worth Art Association, Amon Carter curatorial files).

29. Sheldon Keck to Henry Caldwell, director, Fort Worth Art Center, August 7, 1957 (Amon Carter curatorial files). As he began his first treatment, he assessed the painting's condition, noting that in addition to recent scratches and abrasions, the varnish film was beginning to crystallize and crack microscopically all over the surface. Keck concluded: "This gives a dull, uneven reflection of light. The deterioration of this surface film will probably continue if it is not removed and replaced" (Sheldon Keck to D. S. Defenbacher, director, Fort Worth Art Center, May 29, 1954, Amon Carter curatorial files).

During the 1940s Knoedler's had used several different restorers, including William Suhr and Stephen Pichetto. Mario Modestini described some of the varnishing procedures utilized by restorers working for Knoedler's at this time. According to Mr. Modestini, they did not use an oil varnish but would sometimes lightly oil the paintings. However, Pichetto would apply an isolating varnish layer of shellac followed by layers of damar or acrylic varnish, building up quite a thick layer. Christopher McGlinchey, associate research chemist at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, has identified this shellac layer on a number of paintings restored by Pichetto. McGlinchey also confirmed that Pichetto built up his varnish layers quite thickly. McGlinchey said that the presence of an isolating shellac layer would cause the varnish to behave like an oil varnish during the cleaning process and might also develop a system of fine craquelure similar to that seen in the varnish on *Swimming*. An isolating shellac varnish would also yellow markedly with age, similar to an oil varnish.

30. Sheldon Keck, treatment report on *The Swimming Hole*, July 1954 (Amon Carter curatorial files). The refurbished painting was featured in the Art Association's inaugural exhibition, October 8–31, 1954, and was reproduced in color in the catalogue, *Inaugural Exhibition* (Fort Worth: Fort Worth Art Association, 1954).

31. Henry B. Caldwell, director, Fort Worth Art Association, to Sheldon Keck, July 5, 1957 (Amon Carter curatorial files).

32. Sheldon Keck, treatment report, September 1957 (Amon Carter curatorial files). Keck retained the glue lining applied by Knoedler's in 1944, and his treatment report states only that the painting was "restretched with wax resin and tacks."

33. In 1975 Perry Huston, then conservator at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, repaired additional cleavages on the edges (Susan Smith, registrar, Fort Worth Art Association, notes, April 1975, Amon Carter curatorial files). Two years later his associate Frank Zuccari repaired a surface scratch and sprayed a light layer of synthetic varnish over the surface (Frank Zuccari, associate conservator, Kimbell Art Museum, treatment report, August 26, 1977, Amon Carter curatorial files).

34. The glue lining, probably applied by Knoedler's in 1944, was sound, and the paint film showed no signs of active cleavage or flaking. The painting was mounted on an oversized four-window mortise-and-tenon-keyed mahogany stretcher, which allowed a margin of approximately 3/16 in. to 3/8 in. on all sides of the picture. This stretcher was maintained in the current restoration. The tacking edges had been removed in an earlier restoration, and the margin surrounding the picture had been filled and retouched to match the tones of the painting.

35. I am grateful to Mark Tucker, who provided insights into Eakins' *Meadows, Gloucester* and provided me with a copy of Robert Lodge's examination report of the painting (Paintings Conservation, Philadelphia Museum of Art). I would also like to thank Mark F. Bockrath, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, for sharing his extensive knowledge of Eakins' sketches in the academy's collection as well as Charles Bregler's role in the restoration of many of those works. Anne Hoenigswald, National Gallery of Art, provided examination and treatment reports for *Baby at Play*, *Biglin Brothers Racing*, *The Chaperone*, *Study for Negro Boy Dancing*, and *The Banjo Player*. Dianne Dwyer Modestini discussed the condition and recent restoration history of *Arcadian Landscape* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Christina Currie, Cleveland Museum of Art, shared the results of her technical examination of *The Biglin Brothers*. Kathleen A. Foster provided helpful information based on her extensive knowledge of the artist's technique.

36. Eakins used this technique in *Mending the Net* (1881, Philadelphia Museum of Art) and *The Crucifixion*. For further discussion of this aspect of Eakins' working method, see Siegl,

The Thomas Eakins Collection, pp. 90, 93. The artist also used this technique in *The Biglin Brothers Turning Stake*; Currie, "*The Biglin Brothers Turning Stake* by Thomas Eakins: A Technical Study Reveals Surprising Techniques."

37. Two handwritten inscriptions appear in ink near the bottom of the canvas. Near the bottom center, the word "EAKINS" appears in block letters, while near the lower right corner the words "Swimming Hole" are written in script; below this and to the right is printed "Thomas Eakins 1883." These are clearly not in Eakins' hand and may have been added by his wife, Susan. Kathleen A. Foster helped to authenticate and decipher the faded remnants of Eakins' signature and date on a visit to Fort Worth in September 1993, when she examined *Swimming* with the author and Doreen Bolger during the process of cleaning.

38. The style of the frame may suggest a date of 1875-85; however, the date "1892" is incised in two places into the reverse of the frame. This might suggest that Eakins selected the frame for one of his works that were included in the 1892 *Retrospective Exhibition of the Society of American Artists* at the American Fine Arts Society, New York, or the exhibition held in the summer of the following year at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.

39. The show opened on May 11 and included twenty-nine works, about half of which were portraits. The remaining fifteen paintings were identified as "pictorial compositions" in four Philadelphia newspaper reviews, "a number of landscapes" and "a few sketches." See Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 1:163, and Evan Turner, "Thomas Eakins: The Earle Galleries Exhibition of 1896," *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 9 (May 1979): 100–107.

40. One of the finest examples of the period, it would have been extraordinarily expensive, according to Eli Wilner; see "Suitable for Framing," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, August 8, 1993, section F.

41. The frame remained on the painting as late as 1975, as documented in installation photographs from *Figure and Field in America*, the exhibition that marked the opening of the Fine Arts Building at the University of Texas at Arlington, March 14-April 13, 1975 (memorandum, January 5, 1993, Sarah Cash, Amon Carter curatorial files).

42. Doreen Bolger identified the original frame in a reproduction from the Sunday, October 14, 1928, issue of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram and Sunday Record*; a copy of the article remained in the research files at the Modern Art Museum and was transferred to the Amon Carter Museum with the painting. The frame was cleaned and restored by Eli Wilner.

43. Doreen Bolger obtained this photograph from Eileen Sullivan, Photograph and Slide Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The frame for *The Writing Master* was subsequently removed from the painting and is currently unlocated.

Sarah Cash

Biographies of Models for *Swimming*

[*See fig. 72 for key to names of models*]

BENJAMIN FOX (c. 1865–c. 1900) MODEL 1

Little is known of the life of Benjamin Franklin Fox, Jr., before or during the time he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1883, 1884, and 1888, nor has much been revealed about his relationship with Eakins.[1] The son of Benjamin Franklin Fox, a Philadelphia awning maker, Fox listed himself as an artist in city directories from 1885 through 1892, and then intermittently through the 1890s. In 1888 he received the first prestigious Charles Toppan Prize for his only submission to the Pennsylvania Academy annuals, a painting called *Sympathy*. Perhaps bolstered by this success, he secured a studio in 1889,[2] but his wave of good fortune was short-lived. Three years later, at age twenty-seven, he was admitted to the Lunatic Asylum of the Philadelphia Hospital for "acute mania."[3] Although he continued to live in Philadelphia after his release from the hospital, he disappeared from city directories after 1897.[4] No works by Fox have been located, nor has he been identified as the subject of any other works by Eakins (or his photographic collaborators).[5]

JESSE GODLEY (1862–1889) MODEL 2

Jesse Godley, Jr., was the second of five children born in Philadelphia to Henry Godley, employed in the storage warehouse business, and Sophia Makins (Weygandt) Godley.[6] Named after his maternal grandfather, Jesse was also a direct descendant of John Hart, a signer of the Declaration of Independence from Hopewell, New Jersey. Soon after graduating from Friends Central School in Philadelphia, Godley began to study at the academy in 1883 (see fig. 73); he also attended in 1884 and 1886.

After completing his studies at the academy, Godley became an assistant in the decorating firm of George Frank Stephens and Colin Campbell Cooper, Jr. In March 1887 he was promoted to partner in the firm, thereafter known as Stephens, Cooper, and Godley, specializing in "designing and working in clay, color, plaster, and materials of a kindred nature."[7] In November 1887 Godley married Winifred Waldron Fay, another of Eakins' students at the academy. Before his untimely death of typhoid fever on January 30, 1889—shortly after the birth of his only son, Harry—Godley created sculptures (see fig. 74), paintings, and drawings, including pen drawings on silk, primarily of animals.[8]

GEORGE REYNOLDS (c. 1839–1889) MODEL 3

Nothing is known of the Irish-born George Reynolds' activities before he enrolled in 1861, at age twenty-two, as a corporal in Company M of the Ninth Regiment, New York Cavalry. At that time he listed his occupation simply as "gentleman."[9] His life as a cavalryman was one of paradoxes. By early 1863 he had been arrested, court-martialed, sentenced to twelve months' hard labor at Fort Lyon, Virginia, and reduced to the rank of private for disobeying orders and striking his superior officer.[10] By the fall of 1864, however, Reynolds had redeemed himself and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for capturing the Virginia state flag during the Battle of Winchester, on September 19, 1864.[11]

Discharged when his term of service expired in the fall of 1864, Reynolds apparently began his artistic career in New York City, listing himself as an artist for the first time in the 1869 directory.[12] Little is known of his training, but at least through 1886 he executed pen, pencil, and watercolor drawings of New York scenes and exhibited these and other works at the Brooklyn Art Association (1879–82, where he used the middle initial H.), the National Academy of Design (1879–82), and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1881, 1883; see figs. 75 and 76). Reynolds' engraved illustrations of New York scenes appeared in *Harper's Weekly* and *Appleton's Journal*.

Perhaps the death of Reynolds' wife in 1882 prompted him to undertake study in Philadelphia. He studied at the academy from 1882 until 1886,[13] though he main-

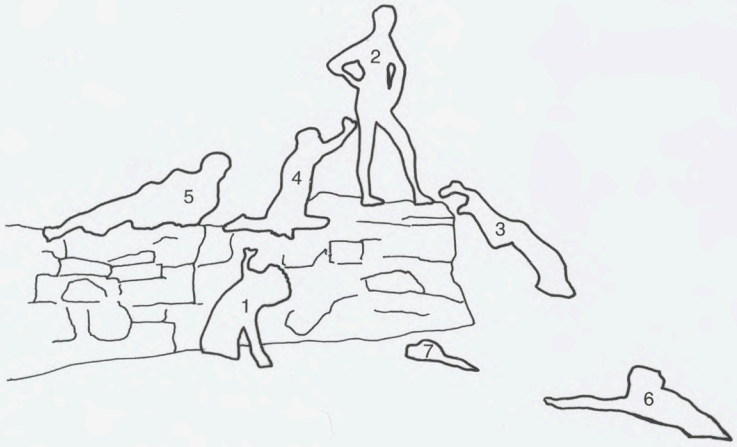


FIG. 72. The models in *Swimming*: (1) Benjamin Fox, (2) Jesse Godley, (3) George Reynolds, (4) J. Laurie Wallace, (5) Talcott Williams, (6) Thomas Eakins, (7) Harry, Eakins' setter



FIG. 73. Group portrait from Pennsylvania Academy, showing Jesse Godley seated on floor, third figure from left, c. 1883–86, platinum print, 6¼ x 8⁵⁄₁₆ in., Ablah Library, Department of Special Collections, Wichita State University

tained his residence in New York. Bregler, who described Reynolds as being "of a serious demeanor," reported that he was memorable for his "loyal friendship for Eakins."[14] By 1887 Reynolds probably had moved back to New York, where he died in 1889.[15] Thirty of his New York City views and portraits—watercolors and pen and ink drawings dating from 1877–78—were illustrated posthumously in Ogden Goelet's 1895 expanded edition of Dr. John Francis' *Old New York*.[16]

J. LAURIE WALLACE (1864–1953) MODEL 4

John Laurie Wallace was born to Scottish parents in Garvagh, Ireland, and at an early age moved with them to the United States. By 1879 he was studying at the academy, where he remained a student until 1882 (fig. 77). Wallace's artistic sensibilities appear to have been congruent with the several photographs of himself in classical poses such as those preparatory to *Arcadia* (see fig. 5); a photograph once in his possession and possibly taken by him (Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha) documents one of his female models nude in a wooded landscape, leaning over in the pose of the thorn puller seen in several of Eakins' photographs of nude men.

Eakins recommended Wallace for an expedition to paint portraits of cattle barons and their families in Texas and New Mexico, which he undertook from December 1883 through early 1885. After returning to Philadelphia briefly in 1885, Wallace relocated to Chicago to teach at the Art Institute there and became president of the Chicago Society of Artists. Eakins had supported Wallace's candidacy for the position. The two corresponded at least through the late 1880s.[17] In 1891 Wallace left Chicago for Omaha, at the encouragement of a wealthy businessman whose portrait he painted. There he became the director of the newly formed Western Art Association and a founder of the Omaha Art Guild and taught at the Omaha High School. He established a reputation as a prolific painter of society portraits (fig. 78) and was the subject of a number of solo exhibitions. Perhaps recalling his role as a model for *Swimming*, some years later, probably in Omaha, Wallace painted *The Swimming Hole* (fig. 79). Wallace died in Omaha on June 30, 1953.



FIG. 74. Jesse Godley, *Lion seated*, n.d., plaster, 8 x 9 x 4½ in., collection of Emeline Driscoll



FIG. 75. George Reynolds, *Interior with Fireplace and Chair*, 1880, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust and the Henry Gibson Fund, 1985.68.42.9



FIG. 76. George Reynolds, *285 Front Street, New York City*, n.d., pen and ink on paper, 7⅝ x 7¼ in., Collection of The New-York Historical Society, 1943.49

TALCOTT WILLIAMS (1849–1928) MODEL 5

The accomplished journalist Talcott Williams, the son of the Congregationalist missionary William Frederic Williams and his wife, Sarah Amelia (Pond) Williams, was born in Abeih, Turkey, where as a youth he acquired the broad knowledge of Eastern languages and culture that would lead him to become a distinguished authority on the Near East. At age sixteen he was sent to America to be educated at Phillips Andover Academy and afterwards at Amherst College, graduating in 1873. He began his career as a political reporter and established his reputation in various correspondent and editorial posts for the New York *World* and *Sun* and the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* before beginning work at the Philadelphia *Press* in 1881. The gregarious Williams, known as "Talk-a-lot," held the positions of managing editor and associate editor at the *Press*, where he served for thirty-one years. Throughout his tenure there his penetrating editorials brought him recognition as the city's leading cultural critic, and he was known to have started many Philadelphia artists on the road to prominence.[18]

By the 1880s Williams actively supported the University of Pennsylvania's newly established museum and archaeology department and was the secretary of its Babylonian Exploration Fund. He helped raise money for both and conducted collecting expeditions to Morocco to benefit the Archaeological Museum's collections (he also donated material to the Smithsonian Institution).[19] His many interests were chronicled in his extensive archive of newspaper clippings (which later became the basis of the morgue at the Columbia School of Journalism, where he was appointed the first director in 1912). As a highly learned man,Williams represented a new breed of American journalist.

Williams married Sophia Wells Royce of Albion, New York, in 1879. He wrote two books in addition to his numerous articles: *Turkey, A World Problem of Today* (1921) and *The Newspaper Man* (1922). He counted among his friends the most prominent and cultured Philadelphians, including the Shakespearean scholar Horace Howard Furness (1802–1896); Eakins' friend and patron, the author and physician S. Weir Mitchell (1829–1914); Dr. D. Hayes Agnew (1818–1892), professor of

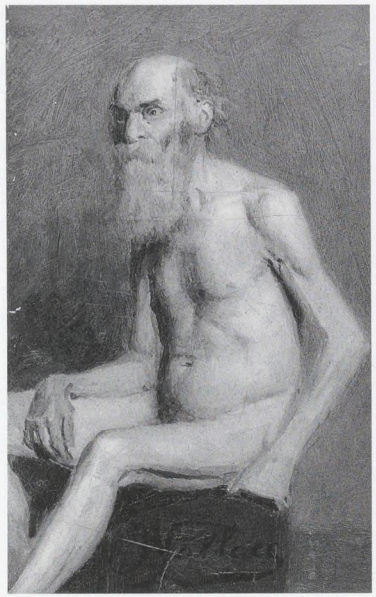


FIG. 77. J. Laurie Wallace, *Old Man*, c. 1880, oil on panel, 11 x 7 in., Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph I. Barker in memory of George Barker, 1966, 1966.127



FIG. 78. J. Laurie Wallace, *Pensive, the While She Dreams Awake*, 1916, oil on canvas, 21⅞ x 18 in., Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, bequest of Jennie M. Lichnovsky, 1964.604



FIG. 79. J. Laurie Wallace, *The Swimming Hole*, n.d., oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in., Collection, Omaha Public Schools



FIG. 80. Thomas Eakins, *Eakins' Dog "Harry,"* c. 1880–90, platinum print, 4 x 7 7/16 in., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, transferred from Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Archives, 1983, HMSG 83.64

surgery at the University of Pennsylvania and the subject of Eakins' painting *The Agnew Clinic* (see fig. 35); and the university's influential provost William Pepper, who supported Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion*.[20] Williams was a member of a number of learned societies and clubs, including the Contemporary Club, founded in 1886, of which Edward Hornor Coates and Walt Whitman were also members. He was also well acquainted with Coates' wife Florence and his son-in-law J. E. D. Trask, managing director of the academy from 1905 to 1913.[21]

THOMAS EAKINS (1844–1916) MODEL 6

HARRY MODEL 7
See fig. 80.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Cheryl Leibold, archivist at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, for providing the years these students attended the academy; her letter to the author of December 13, 1994, states that academy records do not show specific semesters for the students, only years of matriculation (Amon Carter curatorial files). Slightly different dates are cited in Maria Chamberlin-Hellman, "Thomas Eakins as a Teacher" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1981), Appendix B, "Students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1876–1886," pp. 506–546.

2 . Gopsill's Philadelphia city directory for 1889.

3. A letter to Dr. T. Hollingsworth Andrews from Wilfred W. Harske, dated November 4, 1902 (College of Physicians of Philadelphia), states: "Benjamin Fox was admitted to the wards of the insane department April 29, 1902 [*sic*; later in the letter the year is given as 1892]. On admission he was twenty-seven years of age—diagnosis acute mania (hysteroid)—occupation artist. His first attack was noticed in April 1902 [*sic*] . . . [he] raved about 'Madame Blavatsky' the 'Theosophist.' . . . For the last four months lost confidence in himself and has studied theosophy, losing sleep and rest. Much excited. He said he was Christ and wanted to see St. Joseph." A letter of July 23, 1954, from Carroll H. Beck, Jr., registrar, Philadelphia General Hospital, to Ella N. Wade, curator, College of Physicians of Philadelphia, confirms the information stated in Harske's letter and states Fox's admission date as April 26, 1892 (College of Physicians of Philadelphia). Beck further quoted from the Men's Registrar of Blockley or Philadelphia General Hospital that Fox was white, aged twenty-seven, a single artist who lived at 1544 South Street, Philadelphia (where he was born), and that he was admitted by (his father) Benjamin Fox. The younger Fox was discharged on June 23, 1892, but readmitted to the asylum on September 20, 1892. I am grateful to Gretchen Worden, curator, College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Inquiries to the City of Philadelphia Department of Records yielded no photographs or physical descriptions of Benjamin Fox. I am grateful to Ward J. Childs, city archivist, for his assistance in this search.

4. Fox lived with his father from 1886 through 1897—with the exception of 1893 when his address is not recorded. Though listed as an artist in all of those years (except 1896, when he was listed as a clerk), he maintained a studio only from 1886 through 1892.

5. The letter cited in n. 3 was affixed to the reverse of a portrait of Christ thought at one time to be by Fox. During a recent cleaning the painting was discovered to bear the signature and date *Maurer, 1890* (Julie S. Berkowitz, *The College of Physicians of Philadelphia Portrait Catalogue* [Philadelphia: College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 1984], pp. 23–24). No connection has been discovered between Fox and Maurer, who, according to Berkowitz, might have been the Philadelphia portraitist Charles Maurer (1844–1931).

6. For more on the Godley family, see Wilfred Jordan, *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania: Genealogical and Personal Memoirs* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1936), esp. p. 4.

7. Articles of agreement, Stephens, Cooper, and Godley, March 1, 1887, in the collection of Godley's granddaughter, Mrs. Emeline R. Driscoll of Richards, Texas. I am grateful to Mrs. Driscoll for sharing so much documentation on Godley's life, and to Cheryl Leibold for directing her to contact the Amon Carter Museum.

8. Godley exhibited a sculpture of a lion at the Pennsylvania Academy annual in 1885 and in the 1887 annual showed three sculptures: a jaguar, a tiger, and fragments of a frieze for the Radnor Hunt Club. In 1890, a year after his death, sixteen of his sculptures were exhibited at the annual as a memorial to him. Several of his works during these years are in the collection of Emeline Driscoll. From 1890 to 1893 Winifred worked as an interior decorator for Stephens, Cooper, & Co. (Philadelphia city directories).

9. Records of the Ninth Regiment of the New York Cavalry, Company Muster Rolls and Descriptive Books, National Archives, Washington, D.C., cards 4595350 and 33485765. See also Newel Cheney, *History of the Ninth Regiment, New York Volunteer Cavalry, War of 1861 to 1865* (Poland Center, N.Y., 1901), p. 412, quoted in Whitney Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): n. 62. Bregler was apparently the first to state that Reynolds was "a Civil War veteran" (Charles Bregler, ["Eakins as a Teacher"], *The Arts* 17, no. 6 [March 1931]: 376–377). This may have been the source of Lloyd Goodrich's statement that Reynolds had been a cavalry captain in the Civil War (Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work* [New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1933], p. 178). Kate Kernan Rubin, "Thomas Eakins, *The Veteran*," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 39 (Winter 1984): 22 nn. 8–9, recorded Reynolds' status in the New York Cavalry, but stated his age upon enrollment was twenty-three. It is not known whether Reynolds was related to Susan Macdowell Eakins' cousin, Alfred Reynolds (1849–1926), a colonel who fought in the Spanish-American War and the subject of a 1902 portrait by Eakins (see Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work*, no. 359, p. 193). No George Reynolds in the 1861 New York City directory can be matched with the artist.

10. Records of the Ninth Regiment of the New York Cavalry, cards 33485765, 4595807, 4595885, 36859537, and Notation, War Department, Adjutant General's Office, May 27, 1874 (National Archives). Bregler noted that Reynolds "at one time spoke bitterly of some incident during his career in the Army of the Civil War" (Bregler to Henri Marceau, Philadelphia Museum of Art, April 20, 1943 [Philadelphia Museum of Art]).

11. Records of the Ninth Regiment of the New York Cavalry, card 4597119. Davis, "Erotic Re-

vision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," pp. 328–329 n. 63; Cheney, *History of the Ninth Regiment, New York Volunteer Cavalry, War of 1861 to 1865*; and Rubin, "Thomas Eakins, *The Veteran*," p. 22 n. 9, also document Reynolds' hero status.

12. The discharge is documented in Records of the Ninth Regiment of the New York Cavalry, cards 4596675, 36859537, 4597119. Reynolds is listed in New York directories as living in Brooklyn in 1869, 1870, 1872, and 1873. His name then disappears until 1883 (see n. 15).

13. Bregler stated Reynolds was "attracted by Eakins' work and came to Philadelphia to study under him" (Bregler, ["Eakins as a Teacher"], pp. 376–377; see also Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work*, 1:298).

14. Bregler to Marceau, April 20, 1943.

15. Susan Eakins recorded that Reynolds died in 1889; see Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), microfiche ed., I/6/A/5. In an undated address listing, she recorded his name "care of Dr. G. M. Weeks, 356 E. 72d St., N.Y.," perhaps a reference to someone tending to him before his death (I/7/B/4). Margaret McHenry states that after Reynolds left the Art Students' League he returned to New York City for the rest of his life (*Thomas Eakins Who Painted* [privately printed, 1946], p. 71). This was probably the George Reynolds listed as an engraver in 1887 and 1888 New York City directories; an artist named George Reynolds was listed in an 1888 New York business directory but the name then disappears.

16. See Richard J. Koke, ed., *A Catalog of the Collection, Including Historical, Narrative, and Marine Art* (New York: The New-York Historical Society and G. K. Hall, 1982), p. 89. The New-York Historical Society owns over forty of Reynolds' works on paper, including the thirty illustrations for *Old New York*. Reynolds' *Memorial Tablet of the Great Fire* appears in the scrapbook of prints and drawings entitled *Booth's History of New York*, collected by Thomas Addis Emmet (1828–1919) (New York Public Library, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints, and Photographs).

17. Eakins attempted to visit Wallace in Chicago on his return from the Badlands; see Foster and Leibold, *Writing About Eakins*, p. 160. Wallace also corresponded with Susan Macdowell Eakins.

18. Elizabeth Dunbar, *Talcott Williams: Gentleman of the Fourth Estate* (Brooklyn: Robert E. Simpson and Son), p. 179. Williams' papers are in the collection of the Amherst College Archives. Williams seems to have written little art criticism for the *Press* in the 1880s; typed transcripts of his articles date only to 1887 (Elizabeth Dunbar Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia).

19. Dunbar, *Talcott Williams*, pp. 199, 239, 242–243.

20. It is interesting to note that Mitchell, a friend of both Williams and Eakins, wrote about the black rocks around Dove Lake in *Hugh Wynne*, his 1898 historical novel of the American Revolution. Dunbar, *Talcott Williams*, p. 183, mentions that Mitchell was Williams' neighbor and that the two collaborated on a salon in the early 1880s, "the talk in [which] took form in [Weir's] novels." I. Layton Register makes note of Mitchell's references to Black Rock Road (near Dove Lake) in his "Historical Remarks," p. 152 (see my essay, n. 8).

21. Williams reviewed their books near the turn of the century (Dunbar, *Talcott Williams*, p. 278).

Milan R. Hughston with Sarah Cash

Exhibition History and Bibliography for *Swimming*

THOMAS EAKINS
Born July 25, 1844; died June 25, 1916

SWIMMING (also called *The Swimmers* and *The Swimming Hole*) Oil on canvas, 27 5/16 x 36 5/16 in. (69.4 x 92.2 cm) Signed and dated on the rocky foundation: EAKINS 1885

EX. COLL.: Edward Hornor Coates, October-November 1885; Thomas Eakins, 1885-1916; his wife, Susan Macdowell Eakins, 1916–1925; purchased by the Friends of Art, Fort Worth Art Association (later the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth), 1925–1990. Acquired by the Amon Carter Museum, 1990, from the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth through grants and donations from the Amon G. Carter Foundation, the Sid W. Richardson Foundation, the Anne Burnett and Charles Tandy Foundation, Capital Cities/ABC Foundation, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, the R. D. and Joan Dale Hubbard Foundation, and the people of Fort Worth. 1990.19.1

This bibliography is intended to provide a comprehensive record of Thomas Eakins' *Swimming* through a complete history of its exhibitions and its discussion in print. As one of the most important works in Eakins's oeuvre, *Swimming* has a lengthy history, subject to new interpretations by successive generations of art historians. The following material is arranged chronologically, with exhibitions and reviews listed first, followed by other references. Quotations from reviews and other publications are included if they mention *Swimming* directly, and illustrations are in black and white unless otherwise noted. Kathie Bennewitz, former curatorial assistant at the Amon Carter Museum, originally brought together Lloyd Goodrich's records on *Swimming* and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth's files on the painting to create an initial document from which this history was checked, confirmed, and compiled.

The literature on Thomas Eakins is large, but four works in particular remain the best sources for further research: Susan Danly and Cheryl Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994); Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 1982); and Elizabeth Milroy, *Guide to the Thomas Eakins Research Collection, with a Lifetime Exhibition Record and Bibliography*, edited and with contributions by Douglass Paschall (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1995).

1885

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *Fifty-sixth Annual Exhibition Catalogue* (October 29–December 10, 1885), no. 88, as *Swimming*, "Property of Edward H. Coates."

REVIEWS: "Academy Exhibition. Fifty-sixth Annual Display of Pictures and Other Works. An Unusually Varied and Interesting Collection, with Many Masterpieces of Contemporary American Artists, at Home and Abroad. The Principal Pictures," (Philadelphia) *Inquirer*, October 29, 1885, p. 2: "an important work entitled 'Swimming,' that will excite abundant criticism, both friendly and unfriendly." // "The Academy Pictures. How the Exhibition at the Academy Compares with Those Elsewhere," (Philadelphia) *Press*, October 29, 1885, p. 4, mentions that Eakins is represented by three canvases in the PAFA Annual. // "At the Private View. First Impressions of the Autumn Exhibition at the Academy of the Fine Arts," (Philadelphia) *Times*, October 29, 1885, p. 2: "not agreeable. It represents a group of men

bathing and is evidently intended to show the results of instantaneous photography. The attitude of the diver is presumably correct, but it does not convey the impression of any possible motion and neither the flesh painting nor the general color of the picture is pleasing." // "The Fine Arts. Some New Pictures," (Philadelphia) *Evening Telegraph*, October 31, 1885, p. 4: "The contributions of Mr. Thomas Eakins to the present exhibition are not so important as the pictures he has sometimes shown, although there is interesting matter in his group of swimmers and in his portraits of George Reynolds and Professor John Laurie Wallace." // "The Fine Arts," (Philadelphia) *Evening Telegraph*, November 3, 1885, p. 4: mentions the controversy swirling around Eakins. // L[eslie]. W. M[iller]., "Art. The Awards of Prizes at the Academy," *American*, no. 274 (November 7, 1885): 45: "Mr. Eakins has done some very strange things, and while compelling admiration for his knowledge and skill in certain important respects, has kept his friends perpetually apologizing for him by the wildness of his errors in dealing with other things of quite as much importance. In nothing that he has done however has his work been so persistently and inexcusably bad as in the landscapes which he has introduced as backgrounds for his figures. That in the 'Swimming,' shown at the present exhibition, will serve as a fair illustration, and the extent of the mischief which such an example exerts is only to be judged by these reflections of it which disfigure the work of most of the older students."

1886

EXHIBITED: Louisville, Kentucky, *Illustrated Catalogue of the Art Gallery of the Southern Exposition, Louisville, Ky.*, August 28–October 23, 1886, no. 70, as *The Swimmers*, $800.

1887

EXHIBITED: Chicago, Inter-State Industrial Exposition, *Catalogue of the Paintings Exhibited by the Inter-State Industrial Exposition of Chicago, 15th Annual Exhibition*, September 7–October 22, 1887, no. 140, as *Swimming*.

1917

EXHIBITED: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins*, November 5–December 3, 1917, no. 42, ill., as *The Swimming Hole*, lent by Mrs. Thomas Eakins. Not signed or dated.

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late Thomas Eakins*, December 23, 1917–January 13, 1918, no. 96, as *The Swimming Hole*, lent by Mrs. Eakins; ill. p. 66.

1921

EXHIBITED: New York, Ferargil Galleries, *Thomas Eakins and George Bellows*, March 1921, no. 4, as *The Old Swimming Hole*.

REVIEWS: "Random Impressions in Current Exhibitions," *New York Tribune*, February 27, 1921, p. 8: "An exhibition sometimes makes odd bedfellows. At the Ferargil Gallery, the walls are divided between George Bellows and the late Thomas Eakins, an interesting and not inharmonious pair, though the younger man seems a little crude and breathless after his sedate senior. Most of the canvases in both groups have been seen before. It is good to see some of them again, especially Eakins's lovely *Hunting Ground*, his *Old Swimming Hole*, and the charming portraits which he called *Clara*. These things all wear well." // Hamilton Easter Field, *The Arts* 1, no. 3 (February-March 1921): 45: "George Bellows is an interesting painter because of his personality and in spite of his theories. Go to the Ferargil Gallery, if you do not live too far away, and compare his work with that of Thomas Eakins. Take *The Old Swimming Pool*, by Eakins and compare it carefully with *Tennis*, by George Bellows. Despite the sombre tone of the *Swimming Pool* I think you will feel that the *dramatis personæ* of the swimming pool are real men and boys. Despite their nudity we recognize them as belonging to the early seventies. There is something about the way they wear their hair which gives the date. The man half lying on the dock is unmistakably an American. It is an invaluable statement of historical fact. So men looked and so men acted in these our United States during the lifetime of Thomas Eakins." // Hamilton Easter Field, "At the Ferargil," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 27, 1921, p. 6, repeats his comments from the *Arts*.

REFERENCES: B. D., "Paintings of Thomas Eakins Will Now Be Sold by His Widow," *American Art News 20* (December 24, 1921): 6: "Mrs. Thomas Eakins, widow of the famous artist, has finally decided to dispose of her private collection of her husband's works, heretofore guarded from public purchase, and containing some of the finest individual efforts of the painter. . . . Mrs. Eakins' decision to sell the collection was dictated by her desire to permit art museums and private collectors to acquire representative works by her husband, during her lifetime. She was in New York during the last week, apparently to make known the release of the paintings."

1923

EXHIBITED: New York, Joseph Brummer Galleries, *Exhibition of Paintings and Water Colors by Thomas Eakins*, March 17–April 14, 1923, no. 14, as *The Swimming Hole*.

REVIEW: Alan Burroughs, *The Arts* 3, no. 3 (March 1923): 188: "Though not dated, *The Swimming Hole* evidently belongs to the beginning of this maturer period; at the left a figure lies on a stone pier so that the lines of his body lead to a sitting figure, whose raised arm leads directly to a standing figure; off the end of the stone another figure dives down, and the direction is carried out by placing the head and shoulders of a man in the water at the lower right. The three men on the pier are supported by the torso of a youth who lets himself into the water on the face of the pier. The landscape has the haze of a hot day; the water gleams, and the wet stones reflect the wiggling colors of the shallow part of the *Hole*."

EXHIBITED: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, [*Exhibition of Twenty-eight Paintings in Oil and Watercolor by Thomas Eakins*], December 1923, no cat. no.

1924

REFERENCES: Alan Burroughs, *The Arts* 5, no. 6 (June 1924): 330, lists it in his catalogue of works by Eakins under 1884 as *The Swimming Hole*, 27 x 36, owned by Mrs. Eakins. // Walter Pach, "A Grand Provincial," in *The Freeman Book* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1924), p. 258. Originally published in *The Freeman* 7 (April 11, 1923): 112–114: "A picture which shows this quality ['embodying—not copying—the character of his country and generation'] with special clearness is 'The Swimming Hole.' Disregarding the questions of colour, of the minutiae of naturalism, and of the sense of out-door light—all of which may or may not be in a great picture, and yet have for too long kept us from perceiving what this artist has to offer us—disregarding these questions, there is, above all, the nobility of scale, the emphasis on the lines and masses that build up the work into a thing of large and harmonious proportions. This quality is basic, and it is evidence of Eakins's intuitive understanding of the character of that America of the builders which finds so strong an expression in his art. Just as in a Roman portrait we see the character of the men who could conceive the great empire of that time, who could conceive the arch that traverses space with the invincible sweep of Rome itself, so every picture by Thomas Eakins is instinct with the forces that were sweeping the America of his day"; p. 259: "the strength of Eakins's art lies in the fullness with which his line follows the urge to mastery—physical or intellectual—of the men who incarnated the essential effort of his period. The youth who stands on the rock at the centre of *The Swimming Hole* is rendered with the energy of a Florentine; and in pose and buoyancy it contains more than a hint of the great *St. Christopher* of Pollaiuolo at the Metropolitan Museum."

1928

REFERENCE: Fort Worth Museum of Art, *Catalogue of Paintings in the Permanent Collection* (Fort Worth: The Museum, 1928), p. 26, ill.: "*The Swimming Hole* is an unusual example of Eakins' work, it shows him both as a landscape painter and a painter of the human figure. The stretch of sunlit summer landscape with the deep pool, ledge of rocks and solidly painted trees in full leafage, against which the gleaming nude figures are silhouetted, could have been painted only by a master of landscape painting as well as human anatomy. The canvas has a peculiar interest from the fact that the figure in the extreme right swimming, is an excellent self portrait of Mr. Eakins."

OTHER REFERENCE: Walter Pach, *Ananias or the False Artist* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), pp. 249–250: "In many of the largest galleries there is not a single work by him [Eakins], and his picture of *The Swimming Hole*, where some of the splendid nudes have a quality of drawing like that of a great Florentine, was permitted to go to Forth [*sic*] Worth, Texas. While sincerely congratulating the authorities of the museum there on its acquisition, a person living far from their city can-

not help wishing that this work, so important in the history of American art, were more accessible."

1929

REFERENCE: Suzanne LaFollette, *Art in America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), p. 189: "His mastery of the nude also shows to excellent advantage in the prize-fight scenes; and even better in *The Swimming Hole*, where the figures—particularly the central one—are drawn with admirable force and expressiveness and grouped in a finely rhythmical composition."

1930

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, *Thomas Eakins, 1844–1916*, March 5–April 17, 1930, no. 98. *Catalogue reference*: "An Exhibition of Thomas Eakins' Work," *The Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin* 25, no. 133 (March 1930): 22, no. 98.

EXHIBITED: New York, The Museum of Modern Art, May 1930, *Sixth Loan Exhibition: Winslow Homer, Albert P. Ryder, Thomas Eakins*, no. 100.

REFERENCES: Frank Jewett Mather, "Thomas Eakins' Art in Retrospect," *International Studio* 95, no. 392 (January 1930): 45: "Generally Eakins's sense of character is somewhat tragic. There are notable exceptions—the two concert singers in their full-throated vitality, the splendid lolling nudes in the *Bathing Pool*"; p. 91: "Let us pass rather to the masterpiece of them all, *The Swimming Pool*. The subject is nothing but six naked men and boys on or about a rude stone pier which juts out before a grove, with a glimpse upstream to a rising meadow, closed by woods, which cut off all but a patch of sky. The pyramidal group is as formally composed as any Renaissance picture, with contrast of forms tensely erect or lolling and relaxed, with lovely connecting gestures, everything studied and complete. But, by a singular grace, nothing is far-fetched or forced. Every pose, every gesture is what might be seen. By a happy chance any confused group of bathing men might fall into this monumental order without any one dropping a hand or turning a head. The ingredients are casual and natural, the whole stately and monumental. Of the principle of discovering beauty by selective observation of mere appearances there could be no finer example than is seen here."

1931

REFERENCES: Charles Bregler, ["Eakins as a Teacher"], *The Arts* 17, no. 6 (March 1931): 376-377, "When Mr. Eakins left the Academy . . . Reynolds was the oldest of the group, a kindly man, a Civil War veteran. He was a landscape painter from New York and was attracted by Eakins' work and came to Philadelphia to study under him. He became monitor of the school. He is the diving figure in the picture *The Swimming Hole*. Eakins also painted a portrait of him, one of his best, called *The Veteran*." // Charles Bregler, "Thomas Eakins as a Teacher," *The Arts* 18, no. 1 (October 1931): 29: "Mr. Eakins would come regularly on his appointed days or evenings . . . sometimes accompanied by his dog, of whom he was very fond, a beautiful Gordon setter by the name of Harry. Harry was a very intelligent dog. On entering the room he would pass in and around the many three-legged easels with which the room was crowded without upsetting any of them, and go to the far end of the room and lie down, where he would remain until Mr. Eakins had finished, when he would arise and depart with him. He has painted him in the *Portrait of Mrs. Eakins* owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, also in the picture *The Swimming Hole* now in the Fort Worth Art Museum, Texas"; p. 38: "For a picture for instance like *The Swimming Hole*, a small sketch was made 8 x 10 inches, then separate studies of the landscape and figures, to get the true tone and color, etc. The diving figure being the most difficult to paint, was first modelled in wax. This gave him a thorough knowledge of every form." // Frank Jewett Mather, *Estimates in Art, Series II* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 230, repeats his essay from *International Studio* (January 1930) but goes on to say: "Of the principles of discovering beauty by selective observation of mere appearances there could be no finer example, and of course this was ever Eakins's road to beauty. The picture is not built on the usual formula. The light comes well forward on the pier, and more than half the surface is rather bright. The shadowed pool is not rendered with the richness and variety of color that was already in vogue about this time, about 1898 [*sic*], but Eakins gives after all the look of the scene to an eye focused on the figures and taking the riverscape for granted. This was an old-fashioned procedure. It was the momentary fashion to let outdoor light disintegrate the nude. Hardly any good painter except Renoir dared to stand out of the mode. In the nature of the case, is it hard to see why a figure should lose all interest as a figure simply because it is out of doors, or, withal, why specific illumination should seem the

only admirable attribute of nature. Cézanne was soon to teach us better. And indeed has any picture come nearer to Cézanne's own program of 'doing Poussin after nature' than does *The Swimming Pool*?"

1933

REFERENCE: Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1933), p. 62: "A year or so later he painted the *Swimming Hole*, a group of naked men and boys, including himself and his friends and pupils, and his dog, swimming in a secluded spot. In its theme, its free use of the nude, and its fine landscape, this picture while entirely realistic was one of the most poetic of his works. The numerous sketches he made outdoors for it, his careful planning of the composition, show that it was a subject that attracted him strongly. Compared to the rowing and sailing pictures of a decade earlier, it marked the culmination of his outdoor work; the forms filled the space of the picture more fully, the movement was freest, the design most highly developed—less severe and geometrical, more complex and varied, with a greater sense of pictorial unity. The muscular bodies built up a rhythmical design which recalled some work of the Renaissance"; p. 109: says that in spite of Eakins' great interest in the nude, he actually painted relatively few and cites *Swimming* as well as *William Rush, The Crucifixion*, and "the unfinished *Arcadia*"; p. 150: "his paintings of the nude or semi-nude body, such as the *Swimming Hole*, were the most moving, and if he had attempted it more often his sense of motion might have developed further"; p. 151: "In the few works containing nudes, such as *William Rush* and the *Swimming Hole*, a less formal, more rhythmical and poetic sense of design was manifest"; p. 153, among Eakins' "most complex, free, and moving compositions"; p. 176, includes in a catalogue of the artist's work as no. 190, *The Swimming Hole*; describes signature, "Signed on rock at outer end of pier: 'EAKINS' (date illegible). Signed on back (by Mrs. Eakins), '*Swimming Hole, Thomas Eakins, 1883.*'" Owned by Fort Worth Museum of Art, Fort Worth, Texas; pl. 28.

1935

EXHIBITED: New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *American Genre: The Social Scene in Paintings and Prints, 1800-1935*, March 26–April 29, 1935, no. 30.

1936

EXHIBITED: Baltimore Museum of Art, *Thomas Eakins, 1844–1916: A Retrospective Exhibition of His Paintings*, December 1, 1936–January 1, 1937, no. 13, ill.

1937

EXHIBITED: Detroit Institute of Arts, *Eighteenth Annual Exhibition of American Art*, April 2–May 3, 1937, no. 8.

1938

EXHIBITED: Paris, Musée du Jeu de Paume, *Trois Siècles d'Art aux Etats-Unis*, May–July 1938, no. 54.

1939

EXHIBITED: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Life in America: A Special Loan Exhibition of Paintings Held During the Period of the New York World's Fair*, April 24–October 29, 1939, no. 241. *Catalogue reference*: p. 184: "No American community was complete without its swimming hole and no river, stream, or creek was ever too muddy, small, or contaminated to keep the boys away"; ill. p. 184.

OTHER REFERENCE: Peyton Boswell, "900% Eakins Preferred," *Art Digest* 13, no. 18 (July 1, 1939): 3: "How many gilt edge Wall Street issues of the past dozen years can compare in investment value with the painting reproduced on page 34. . . . The Fort Worth, Texas, Museum purchased the painting in 1925, only 14 years ago, from the artist's late widow. The purchase price was $700. This summer the painting is on view in the 'Life in America' exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum and the insurance value that has been placed upon it is $7,000. Nine hundred percent in 14 years!"; ill. p. 34.

1940

EXHIBITED: San Francisco, Palace of Fine Arts, *Golden Gate International Exposition*, May 25–September 29, 1940, no. 1205.

1941

REFERENCE: F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 610: "In so far as the effects of one art can approach those of another, Eakins is most like Whitman in *The Swimming Hole*."

1942

REFERENCE: Roland McKinney, *Thomas Eakins* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1942), p. 22: "Eakins' canvas *The Old Swimming-hole* is a magnificent example of the grave, almost epic, quality with which Eakins was able to endow a homely American pastime. It is well to remember that this painting antedates George Bellows' *Forty-two Kids*, which is similar in theme, by a full quarter of a century."

1944

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Thomas Eakins Centennial Exhibition*, April 8-May 14, 1944, no. 48.

REVIEW: Lloyd Goodrich, "Thomas Eakins Today," *Magazine of Art* 37, no. 5 (May 1944): 165: "The limitation to portraiture had fundamental consequences in his art. It had been in his figure compositions, especially the few that included nudes, such as *The Swimming Hole* of 1883, that he had attained the freest movement, the richest design. His turning to portraiture stopped any further growth in this direction"; ill. p. 164.

EXHIBITED: New York, M. Knoedler and Company, *A Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins, 1844–1944 Commemorating the Centennial of His Birth*, June 5–July 31, 1944, no. 31. Traveled to Delaware Art Center, Wilmington; Doll & Richards, Boston; State Art Gallery, Raleigh, North Carolina.

REVIEWS: Margaret Breuning, "New York Views Art of Eakins in Comprehensive Exhibition," *Art Digest* 18, no. 17 (June 1, 1944): 7: "In *The Swimming Hole*, showing a group of youths and men swimming, diving, lying on the rocks, his knowledge of the structure of the body and its fine muscular co-ordinations is displayed. The beauty of these figures and of the charming landscape against which they are set strikes a lyric note seldom found in his work. In a few canvases, such as *Arcadia*, Eakins gives idyllic interpretation to a semi-nude in full light against a lushness of greens, but he soon abandoned this theme"; ill. on cover. // "Art: A Force," *Time* 43, no. 25 (June 19, 1944): 44: "*The Swimming Hole* established Eakins as a superb U.S. painter of nudes"; ill. p. 44.

EXHIBITED: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Sport in American Art*, October 10–December 10, 1944, no. 35. *Catalogue reference*: p. 12, "Outer edge of pier: . . . Eakins himself is swimming lower right, with his dog, the red setter, Harry."

1945

REFERENCE: Lloyd Goodrich, "The Study of Nineteenth-Century Art," *Art in America* 33, no. 4 (October 1945): ill. p. 226.

1946

EXHIBITED: Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum, *The Nude in Art*, January 1–February 3, 1946, no. 20.

EXHIBITED: Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, *Exhibition of Paintings by Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins*, December 1, 1946–January 19, 1947, no. 19.

REFERENCE: Margaret McHenry, *Thomas Eakins Who Painted* (privately printed, 1946), p. 54: discusses the Eakins paintings J. Laurie Wallace posed for, including *Swimming*.

1947

EXHIBITED: Norwich, Connecticut, The Slater Memorial Museum, Converse Gallery, *Paintings by Thomas Eakins*, October 19–November 9, 1947, no cat. no.

REVIEW: "Famous Eakins Originals Shown in Converse Gallery," (Norwich) *Bulletin*, October 19, 1947, n.p.: "One of the most delightful of Eakins' outdoor scenes is *The Swimming Hole*, well known through reproductions. Five of the painter's own students form the company bathing in the beautiful mountain pool; the master himself swims toward the group . . . austerely realistic, these figures are real people with intense vitality, painted with knowledge, constructive sense, and sculptural largeness."

REFERENCE: Adam Emory Albright, "Memories of Thomas Eakins," *Harper's Bazaar* 81, no. 2828 (August 1947): 139: "When he painted *The Swimming Hole,* he modeled the figure of the diving boy in plastiline and put a spindle through the middle of the figure so that it could be turned upside down and hold the pose."

1949

EXHIBITED: Fort Worth Art Association, Public Library, *Homer, Eakins, Ryder, Inness, and Their French Contemporaries: A Loan Exhibition from Foremost American Museums and Collectors, Commemorating City of Fort Worth Centennial, 1849–1949*, March 11–April 15, 1949, no. 23, ill.

EXHIBITED: El Paso International Museum, October 1949.

REFERENCE: Lloyd Goodrich, "Realism and Romanticism in Homer, Eakins and Ryder," *Art Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1949): 26, mentions *Swimming* as one of the "few paintings in which the nude had played a part," where "he had achieved the freest movement and the richest design"; ill. p. 23. // Oliver W. Larkin, *Art and Life in America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1949), p. 277: "The horses in his *Fairman Rogers Four-in-hand* and the diving boy in *Swimming Hole* had been modeled in clay before they were painted"; p. 278, discusses negative reaction to *The Gross Clinic*, saying: "Brutal again to this mincing mind would probably have been *The Swimming Hole*, which reminds Professor Matthiessen of Whitman's frank imagery in *Song of Myself.* Six men, Eakins one of them, had gone 'to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked'; one of them dives from the rock, another stands upon it with the splendid corporeality of a Signorelli figure. Out of the reclining, the leaning, the swinging of the six bodies, Eakins created a rhythm in space as well as a frontal pattern upward to the crowning figure and swiftly down to the diver. Within the depth given by his water, his mass of projecting rock, and the wooded bank beyond he gave his bodies an air-surrounded solidity that had seldom been seen in America."

1950

REFERENCE: Resa C. Oglesby, "History of the Fort Worth Art Association" (M.A. Thesis, Texas State College for Women, Department of Art, Denton, 1950), pp. 60–61: "The most important investment of the Friends was the purchase of a canvas by Eakins. An advertisement appeared in an art magazine, offering to sell a number of paintings by the artist, Thomas Eakins. Request was made for photographs and prices, and when these arrived in Fort Worth, the matter of purchasing was seriously considered. Acquiring a painting for its own recognizable merit was a new type of adventure for the Fort Worth Art Association, long accustomed to keeping one very careful eye on the acquisitions reported by the larger museums. Photographs of the paintings were studied carefully. . . . Mrs. Scheuber also wrote to her friend, Miss Mechlin [then secretary of the American Federation of Arts and editor of the *American Magazine of Art*], for advice and received this reply: 'I should think that a painting by Thomas Eakins if it were a characteristic, typical work, would be a very excellent acquisition for your Fort Worth collection. I am not familiar, however, with the painting to which you refer—*The Swimming Hole*. Eakins was better known as a figure painter than as a painter of landscape or outdoor pictures"; p. 62, quotes letters from Clarence Cranmer, who negotiated the sale for Mrs. Eakins, including one dated November 10, 1927, saying: "Yesterday in talking with Mrs. Eakins, she asked me if I had ever felt sorry for parting with the *Swimming Hole* at such a small figure, and I explained to her—with which she agreed—that it was your vision that made such an appeal to me in making the sale. I further feel sure that at no far distant date many will visit your museum to see this masterpiece"; p. 62, on June 6, 1936, Cranmer wrote: "I feel but for Fort Worth, I would have given up further effort—that was the turning point. Then came sales to Met. Museum of twelve water colors, one india ink, three oils; Cleveland Museum, Boston Museum, Worcester, Detroit and so all along the line."

1953

EXHIBITED: *American Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, no. 44, organized by the American Federation of Arts and exhibited 1953–54 under the sponsorship of the United States Information Agency at Stadelisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt; Bayerische Staatsgemaldesammlungen, Munich; Kunsthalle, Hamburg; Charlottenburger Schloss, Berlin; Kunstsammlungen der Stadt, Düsseldorf; Galleria Nazionale D'Arte Moderna, Rome; Palazetto Reale, Milan; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

REFERENCE: Edith Deen, "Mrs. Scheuber, Culture Mother," *Fort Worth Press*, June

4, 1953, p. 18 [article on groundbreaking for new Fort Worth Art Museum]: "All the while, in her own way, she was building for this permanent museum. She was instrumental in purchasing for the museum valuable paintings. One of the most important of these is Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole*."

1954

EXHIBITED: Fort Worth Art Center, *Inaugural Exhibition*, October 8–31, 1954, no cat. no., color ill.

REFERENCE: "Public Favorites (Nos. 41 & 42)," *Time* 64, no. 8 (August 23, 1954): 50: "The heart of summer, the gleam of flesh against green foliage, are conveyed in Eakins' Swimming Hole"; color ill. p. 51.

1955

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition*, January 15–March 13, 1955, no. 72, ill. p. 61.

REVIEW: "150 Years of Fine Arts: Pennsylvania Academy Has Long Presented the Best in U.S. Talent," *Life* 38, no. 13 (March 28, 1955): 72: "Swimming in a secluded pond gave Thomas Eakins a good opportunity to study anatomy and the nude figure in action. Using his friends as models, he made quick sketches as they lounged and plunged. Later in 1883 he worked them into finished painting in his studio. Eakins himself appears in right-hand corner"; color ill. p. 72.

1956

EXHIBITED: Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, *Twenty-fifth Anniversary Exhibition*, November 30, 1956–January 2, 1957, no. cat. no.

REFERENCES: "Eakins," *Gentry* 20 (Fall 1956): 65: "and *Gentry* poses one question: Did the great artist's experiments with an unwieldy toy [the camera] have any direct effect on these marvelously realistic paintings?"; ill. p. 66. // James Thomas Flexner, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Miniatures: Thomas Eakins, 1844–1916, Album XE* (New York: Book-of-the-Month-Club, Inc., 1956), n.p.: "But Eakins insisted that the human body 'is the most beautiful thing there is': he refused, as he wrote, to 'mutilate it.' This went for male figures as well as female. Eakins's lyrical picture *The Swimming Hole* (no. 15) shows his friends and pupils sporting at a secluded forest pool, and he painted in his own head and shoulders protruding from the water"; color ill.

1957

EXHIBITED: Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute, *American Classics of the Nineteenth Century*, October 17–December 1, 1957, no. 67.

REFERENCE: Alexander Eliot, *Three Hundred Years of American Painting* (New York: Time, 1957), p. 143, mentions painting and Eakins' continuing interest in painting the nude "under the most difficult conditions of arrested motion and reflected light. . . . [I]t is perhaps overelaborate. Eakins could not paint relaxation in a relaxed way"; color ill. p. 144.

1958

REFERENCE: Lloyd Goodrich, "What Is American in American Art?," *Art in America* 46, no. 3 (Fall 1958): ill. p. 25.

1959

REFERENCES: Bryan Holme, *Pictures to Live With* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), p. 105: "Like his friend Walt Whitman, Eakins saw beauty in everything around him. His objective was truth, but not until the end of his life did he receive due recognition for the fine pictures he made"; ill. p. 104. // Fairfield Porter, *Thomas Eakins* (New York: George Braziller, 1959), color pl. 32.

1960

EXHIBITED: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, *Famous Families in American Art*, October 8–November 20, 1960, no. 56, ill.

1961

EXHIBITED: Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, *Thomas Eakins: A Retrospective Exhibition*, October 8–November 12, 1961, no. 48. Traveled to Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, cat. by Lloyd Goodrich. *Catalogue reference*: p. 29: "In his few paintings in which the nude or semi-nude had played a part, he had created his freest and richest design. Such a painting as *The Swimming*

Hole had been among his most fully developed designs, with qualities of form and movement suggesting a work of the early Renaissance. Had he attempted more such themes, he might have achieved, in addition to the concentrated power of his portraits, a plastic completeness beyond any American contemporary's except Ryder. As it was, the fundamental sensuousness of his art never reached full expression. The limitations of the world in which he lived, together with his own realistic limitations, prevented full realization of his potentialities"; ill. p. 80.

REVIEW: Charles S. Kessler, "The Realism of Thomas Eakins," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 4 (January 1962): 19: "falls slightly short of complete success. The naked male figures are painted in poses that betray their origin in studio studies, and the triangulation of the group appears somewhat academic and contrived. The figures are finely painted, but the informality of the scene—a diver is just breaking the water—is not accommodated with perfect pictorial tact to the intended monumentality"; ill. p. 19.



Antonio Pollaiuolo, *The Battle of the Nudes*, 1470–75, engraving, 16 x 23⅜ in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, Muriel and Philip Berman Gift

1963

EXHIBITED: Fort Worth, Hotel Texas, The Presidential Suite, *An Art Exhibition for the President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy*, November 22, 1963, no cat. no.

REFERENCE: *American Federation of Arts Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1963): ill. p. 9 [information on art in local collections reproduced as part of announcement of an AFA convention in Dallas].

1964

EXHIBITED: New York, World's Fair, The Gallery at the Better Living Center, *Four Centuries of American Masterpieces: An Exhibition Arranged by the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture*, May 22–October 18, 1964, no. 13. *Catalogue reference*: caption for color ill. on p. 13 calls the men a group of the athletes who rowed on Philadelphia's rivers, admired by Eakins; mentions his experiments with photography.

EXHIBITED: San Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, *Man: Glory, Jest, and Riddle: A Survey of the Human Form Through the Ages*, November 10, 1964–January 3, 1965, no. 175, color ill.

REFERENCE: John Canaday, "Thomas Eakins: Familiar Truths in Clear and Beautiful Language," *Horizon* 6, no. 4 (Autumn 1964): ill. p. 90, caption does not mention *Swimming* specifically but says: "nature for Eakins was not a picturesque spectacle but an integral part of daily life. He was the first American artist to reveal urban man's relationship to nature other than sentimentally or nostalgically, and in these pictures his typical American figures are easily and harmoniously identified with familiar fields and waters."

1965

EXHIBITED: St. Petersburg, Florida, Museum of Fine Arts, *Inaugural Exhibition*, February 7–March 7, 1965, no. 23, ill.

1966

EXHIBITED: New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *Art of the United States, 1670–1966*, September 28–November 27, 1966, no. 85, cat. by Lloyd Goodrich. *Cata-*

logue reference: p. 43: "Eakins was meant to be a great painter of the human body. But the prudery of his environment, combined with his own unwavering realism, thwarted his full development in this direction. In a few compositions in which the nude figure was the central motif, such as *The Swimming Hole*, he revealed potentialities as a plastic designer beyond any contemporary American except his exact opposite, Albert Ryder"; ill. p. 66.

OTHER REFERENCES: James Thomas Flexner, *The World of Winslow Homer, 1836-1910* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1966), p. 147, mentions *Swimming* in the context of Eakins' love for sports and the outdoor life and his interest in the nude; ill. p. 146. // Alan Gowens, *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760-1960* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1966), p. 140: "Security is to be found in proficient self-sufficiency . . . *The Swimming Hole* . . . and many others of sport generally"; ill. p. 131.

1967

REFERENCES: *Great Art Treasures in America's Smaller Museums* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), p. 133: "In 1938, when Fort Worth had more than doubled in population, a new one-room gallery and classroom was dedicated in a new public library and by that time among the works of art acquired was one that continues to be an attraction, Thomas Eakins' 1833 [*sic*] painting of *The Swimming Hole*. . . . It is a fine figure study as well as a reminder of past pleasure in rural America"; ill. p. 132. // Sylvan Schendler, *Eakins* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 81: "In the attempt to discover other reasonable uses for the nude, and to legitimize new subject matter, new themes, and new effects in American painting, Eakins did in fact choose a vaguely Michelangelesque theme when, in 1883, he painted *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 86: "The figures of *The Swimming Hole* yield to time as they do to sunlight and water, fixed there in a rhythmical pyramid, enveloped by time as they are by space. . . . The pyramidal form gives the painting its certain small monumental quality, the sense of permanence attaching to the casual event. Eakins prepared wax models for the nude figures and again worked from a photograph in painting *The Swimming Hole*, yet one may object to the reminders of the studio in those poses only by refusing to see in them a psychological expressiveness achievable by no other artist at that time, or by failing to respond to the certainty with which the total work evokes its mood, its lyricism, its sense of pagan ease. There is more valid reason for regret. Despite his absolute mastery of the human figure, Eakins could not permit himself to paint a male figure with his genitals showing"; ill. p. 84.

1968

REFERENCE: Richard McLanathan, *The American Tradition in the Arts* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 344, mentions *Swimming* as one of the few examples of Eakins' depictions of the nude, the study of which he regarded as essential to art; ill. p. 344.

1969

REFERENCES: *Thomas Eakins: His Photographic Works* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1969), p. 56: "In *The Swimming Hole* (Number 215; Fig. 64) Eakins used photographs of the bodies in the painting (he seems to have made the faces portraits of persons not on location) and of the rocky site of the work." // Gerald M. Ackerman, "Thomas Eakins and His Parisian Masters, Gérôme and Bonnat," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73, no. 1203 (April 1969): 250, discusses Eakins in the European tradition of borrowing subject matter from other artists of the time, noting: "Eakins' '*Swimming Hole*' was painted at the same time his master [Gérôme] was turning to large bathing scenes (as in *Le Grand Bain à Bursa*, formerly in the Hermitage) in the search for naturalistic and non-anecdotal scenes containing many nudes in action." // Moussa M. Domit, *The Sculpture of Thomas Eakins* (Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1969), p. 9: "It is known that he also made wax models, none of which have survived, for *The Swimming Hole*." // Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), pp. 203-204, mentions "his extreme scientism" that made *Swimming* "more of a laboratory for research on the various poses of the human form than a unified work of art. [Eakins] deliberately attempted to re-create outdoors the poses in which Phidias might have placed his live models"; ill. p. 202.

1970

EXHIBITED: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *19th-Century America, Paintings and Sculpture: An Exhibition in Celebration of the Hundredth Anniver-*

sary of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, April 16–September 7, 1970, no. 157, ill. *Catalogue reference*: n.p.: "Eakins's mastery of anatomy is fully demonstrated in this study of nude figures in a plein-air setting. . . . The deliberate pyramidal arrangement is strikingly classical, while the sequential distribution of the swimmers foreshadows Eakins's photographic figure-motion studies of the mid-eighties. Although somewhat rigidly composed, the picture succeeds as a sympathetic study of a beloved American pastime."

EXHIBITED: New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *Thomas Eakins Retrospective Exhibition*, September 22–November 21, 1970, no. 41, cat. by Lloyd Goodrich. *Catalogue references*: p. 16: "Some of his paintings contain passages which in sensuous richness equal Courbet or the early work of Renoir [cites *Swimming*]. . . . In such works he revealed himself as one of the most sensuous colorists of his time"; p. 21: "There were direct links between these subjects and his Arcadian sculptures, and certain idyllic paintings of the early 1880's. Photographs exist of the actual scene of the painting *The Swimming Hole*, with naked youths bathing, though not in the exact positions of the oil"; color ill. p. 24.

OTHER REFERENCES: James Thomas Flexner, *Nineteenth-Century American Painting* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), ill. pp. 238–239. // Russell Lynes, *The Art-Makers of Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), ill. p. 370, caption incorrectly states that Eakins painted *Swimming* in 1873 after having prepared wax models of each of the figures.

1971

REFERENCE: Matthew Baigell, *A History of American Painting* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 173: "This sense of stillness was emphasized by the restrictive compositional formulas which he imposed either in the form of triangles, as in *The Swimming Hole*. . . . [He] preferred to paint the undraped body engaged in an activity appropriate to nudity"; ill. p. 173.

1972

EXHIBITED: Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, *Nature and Focus: American Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, January 21–April 2, 1972, no. 25, cat. by E. A. Carmean, Jr. *Catalogue reference*: p. 14: "For Thomas Eakins, reality was not a result gathered in from a religious confrontation with God's revelations in the landscape, but rather something to be pursued and captured scientifically. Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* reveals this attitude of detached investigation. Using sources from a photographic version of the scene, and adding on-location observations of the empty site and studies of the figures who form the composition, Eakins combined them into the final picture. The painting is a fitting together—even in its final effect—of the results of different kinds of observations"; ill. on cover and p. 14.

OTHER REFERENCES: John Stipp, Allen W. Dirrim, and C. Warren Hollister, *Rise and Development of Western Civilization*, 2d ed., vol. 2 (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1972), color ill., n.p. // Christopher Wood, *One Hundred Masterpieces in Colour* (London: Hamlyn, 1972), p. 99: "He painted what he knew and saw, and *The Swimming Hole* is one of a series of beautifully painted outdoor scenes of sports activities"; color pl. 79.

1973

REFERENCE: Marshall B. Davidson, *The American Heritage History of the Artist's America* (New York: American Heritage, 1973), p. 169: "The moving figures in the *Swimming Hole*, for instance, owe their anatomical correctness to a snapshot taken by Eakins probably in 1883 [*sic*]"; ill. p. 168.

1974

EXHIBITED: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *American Narrative Painting*, October 1–November 17, 1974, no. 76, cat. notes by Nancy Wall Moure and essay by Donelson F. Hoopes. *Catalogue references*: p. 19: "Eakins believed that the study of human anatomy was central to a humanistic art and that each study was . . . 'not going to benefit any grown person who is not willing to see or be seen seeing the naked figure. . . .' *The Swimming Hole* is his paean to a liberated human sensuality, and while American genre painting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century tended to regress into expressions of sentimental anecdote, Eakins' work shone like a beacon"; p. 163: "This painting may record an experience in Eakins' life, for swimming on the New Jersey shore of the Delaware River was one of his favorite pastimes"; ill. p. 162.

OTHER REFERENCES: William H. Gerdts, *The Great American Nude: A History in*

Art (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 122–123: "A more pagan spirit burst forth in a picture of 1883, *The Swimming Hole*, a display of lithe and strong muscular manhood in a pastoral setting, supple young men in a variety of positions—reclining, rising, standing, diving, and swimming. Wallace appears again, as does Eakins himself swimming in the lower right corner, looking at the others. The work is a kind of frieze of the male nude. The figures rise like pedimental sculpture in a triangular design with classical analogies; indeed, the reclining figure and the *Dying Gaul* are specifically related. Yet it is a very contemporary scene—one of the few in which the nude figure could actually be seen and studied without artifice; at the same time, the figures are amazingly like the photographs Eakins was undertaking at the time in order to study the movement of the nude form. It is almost as though the artist had excerpted a series of stills of a figure moving from 'recline' to 'dive,' and chose the key poses and postures to illustrate the action. This, while he himself looked on. Critics have spoken at great length about the naturalness of the scene and of Eakins's much-acknowledged love of athletics and physical prowess. But there is also something very sexual about this work, as, indeed, there is about Eakins's other depictions of male nudity. The love of youth expressed, the nobility and detailed muscularity of the figures, the caressing light, all suggest the sexual attraction on the part of that older man introduced into the composition as observer, or voyeur, at right angles to the general axial direction of the triangle of nude figures. Such sexuality is lacking in Eakins's few treatments of the female figure. Whether conscious or not, homosexuality may have contributed to a sympathy with Walt Whitman, whose great portrait Eakins painted and whose poem 'Twenty-Eight Young Men Bathe by the Shore' bears literary analogy to Eakins's *Swimming Hole*"; color pl. II. // Gordon Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974), p. 160: "Until 1961, when *The Swimming Hole* was cleaned for an Eakins retrospective exhibition, the date of the painting was not known, although a Thomas Anshutz letter of August 1884 stated that Eakins was working on it at that time. It was discovered after cleaning that 1883 was written on the rock pier. The artist continued to work on it, however, until late in 1885, perhaps changing figures in accordance with the ideas of Edward Coates, who had originally commissioned the picture"; p. 349, in his checklist of works, Hendricks incorrectly identifies the figures under no. 322; color pl. 29. Donelson F. Hoopes, "American Narrative Painting," *Antiques* 106 (November 1974): 824: "His *The Swimming Hole* is eminently concerned with life and realism in an era far too involved with false values to have appreciated Eakins' extraordinary contribution"; ill. p. 826.// Henry B. Rule, "Walt Whitman and Thomas Eakins: Variations on Some Common Themes," *Texas Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1974): 29: "Because of its severely naturalistic depiction of a group of male figures, Eakins's *The Swimming Hole* was even more shocking to his contemporaries than were his William Rush paintings; p. 30, relates painting to Whitman's *Song of Myself*: "but the mood and content of Eakins's picture bring most forcefully to mind the pond imagery in Whitman's *Calamus* poems—those poems celebrating comradeship or manly attachment. The pond in these poems is a hidden place, 'far, far in the forest,' separated 'from the clank of the world,' where the poet finds himself surrounded by his 'dear friends.' It represents that secret place deep in man's soul, where the restraints of civilized convention drop away, and the emotional flow between friends is unhampered. The pond in the *Calamus* poems is the font where men are baptized in the religion of loving comradeship. The rhythmical pyramid of naked bodies in Eakins's picture symbolizes perfectly Whitman's meaning. . . . When [Henry] Adams asked himself 'whether he knew of any American artist who had ever insisted on the power of sex, as every classic had always done,' only Walt Whitman came to his mind 'and one or two painters, for the flesh tones.' Of course, Adams could not be blamed for not knowing the work of Eakins; few people penetrated the wall of silence that surrounded him. Today, however, when every school girl reads *Leaves of Grass*, Eakins's pictorial representations of the beauty and innocence of the body can be seen as brilliant and poignant achievements. They seem to plead with us in much the same tone as Whitman's lines, 'Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass, Be not afraid of my body'"; ill. p. 30.

1975

EXHIBITED: The University of Texas at Arlington, Fine Arts Building, *Figure and Field in America*, March 14–April 13, 1975, no cat. no. *Catalogue reference*: p. 14: "Yet he seldom attempted to deal in his finished works with the nude as a subject (as distinct from athletes and such), and when he did so, as here, his approach was on a surprisingly modest scale, and subject to a meticulousness of handling which suggests not just care but circumspection. This is particularly obvious against a field that is very uneven in its handling, ranging from the blurred green behind the

figures, through the suddenly noisy rocks beneath them (so like a mother bird protecting her nest), to the elaborately shimmering surface of the water that embraces those below—notably the artist himself in the lower right corner"; color ill. p. 6.

EXHIBITED: New York, The New York Cultural Center, *Three Centuries of the American Nude*, May 9–July 13, 1975, no. 32, ill. on cover. Traveled to Minneapolis Institute of Arts and University of Houston Fine Arts Center.

REFERENCES: Tom C. Williams, "Thomas Eakins: Artist and Teacher for All Seasons," *American Artist* 39, no. 392 (March 1975): ill. p. 60, caption reads: "Eakins was not interested in the decorative qualities of color; what concerned him was its coordination with form. Eakins seldom gave free rein to fantasy." // John Wilmerding, "Peale, Quidor, and Eakins: Self-Portraiture as Genre Painting," in *Art Studies for an Editor: Twenty-five Essays in Memory of Milton S. Fox* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), pp. 299–300: "One other painting of nude figures included Eakins's self-portrait, *The Swimming Hole*, 1883. . . . This celebration of man in nature recalls his friend Walt Whitman's poem 'Twenty-Eight Young Men Bathe by the Shore' from *Leaves of Grass*. . . . Meanwhile, *The Swimming Hole* was the culmination of a type he had begun with his early rowing scenes. The diving figure caught in mid-air reminds one even more of the photographic vision, as Eakins again holds in equilibrium our awareness of time and timelessness. . . . *The Swimming Hole* was one of his most evocative summaries of personal autobiography. As it had been for Peale and Quidor, in different period styles and attitudes, genre painting became for Eakins the unlikely, yet notably effective vehicle for expressing and describing himself"; ill. p. 308.

1976

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *In This Academy: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1805–1976*, April 22–December 31, 1976, no. 226. *Catalogue reference*: Louise Lippincott, "Thomas Eakins and the Academy," p. 176, "For *The Swimming Hole* Eakins drew upon a number of the visual sources he had introduced at the Academy—photographs, life class studies, and the Muybridge work—to produce a work which summarizes the ideals of his teaching there. Both in this painting and in his classes he was using such techniques as aids in the study of the construction of the human figure, which was the focus of his ideal art education. By emphasizing the study of the nude, Eakins felt that he was emulating the ancient Greek sculptors, who did not have antiques to imitate. Phidias, he thought, must have worked from nature. *The Swimming Hole* was to Eakins a modern equivalent of the achievements of the classical sculptors. At the Academy, Eakins wanted to teach his students his methods of observation, so that they too could emulate the classical ideals which he embodied in this painting"; ill. p. 175.

OTHER REFERENCES: Ronald J. Onorato, "Photography and Teaching: Eakins at the Academy," *American Art Review* 3, no. 4 (July–August 1976): 132: mentions "George Reynolds, a student of Eakins who appears in *The Swimming Hole* of 1884 and other paintings from this period" as a possible model for a photograph; pp. 134–135 and nn. 23–25, mentions photographs (only three were known at that time) and oil sketches preliminary to *Swimming*, used as "field sketches" when Eakins returned to his studio; ill. p. 138. // John Wilmerding, *American Art* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 139–140, in the chapter "Psychological Realism" mentions *Swimming* as a composition from models and photographs: "at once an ordinary shared experience and a timeless arcadian vision" and notes influence of Muybridge's photographs on stopped action of the diver; fig. 167.

1977

EXHIBITED: Kansas City, Missouri, William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art/Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, *Kaleidoscope of American Painting*, December 2, 1977–January 22, 1978, no. 76. *Catalogue reference:* p. 63: "Eakins's interest in photography has certainly influenced this painting. He and his dog are seen at the bottom right. His pupils posed for the various figures, and the diver in stopped motion must derive from an action photograph"; ill. p. 63.

OTHER REFERENCES: Milton W. Brown, *American Art to 1900* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), p. 521: [*Swimming* is] "Poussinesque in its classical structure and serenity, but the contemporary note of visual objectivity is obviously dependent on the camera. This is a rare example in which he permitted himself the luxury of using the nude, for he would not paint it out of realistic context, and it was hardly ever



Thomas Eakins, *Thorn Puller*, c. 1883, albumen print, 3 11/16 x 4 3/4 in. (irreg.), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, transferred from Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Archives, 1983, HMSG 83.21

in context in Philadelphia"; ill. p. 522. // Phyllis D. Rosenzweig, comp., *The Thomas Eakins Collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), pp. 100–105, discusses and illustrates related works in Hirshhorn's collection; ill. p. 103; p. 104: ". . . Thorn puller, c. 1883 Photograph (sepia), 3 5/8 x 4 1/2 (9.0 x 11.5), irreg. These photographs, like the previous three, are from one of the scrapbooks in the Hirshhorn Museum's Samuel Murray collection. They were mounted on a page at the bottom of which was written, possibly by Mrs. Murray, 'Eakins Models.' Possibly also taken at the site of *The Swimming Hole*, they were not, however, as casually posed." // Mary Ann Tighe and Elizabeth Ewing Lang, *Art America* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977), p. 155: "Occasionally, Eakins used photos as reference material for his work. In one picture, the artist's students are seen relaxing at a local swimming hole. The raw material this photo supplied—the repertoire of poses and the anatomical detail—were shaped by Eakins into his painting *The Swimming Hole* of 1883. It has often been pointed out that the group of men lined up across the center of the painting resemble a series of still-photographs, illustrating the key poses of a body moving from stillness to action"; ill. p. 155.

1978

REFERENCE: Evan H. Turner, introduction to Theodor Siegl, *The Thomas Eakins Collection* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), p. 26: "Recognizing that [Eakins and Whitman] each pursued his work quite independently of the other—many of the artist's most famous subject pictures had been painted before he ever met the poet (one cannot determine when Eakins first began to read Whitman's writings)—the frequency of analogous images becomes only more fascinating. To cite one example, we might compare Eakins's *Swimming Hole*, in part somewhat contrived, with the poet's smoother and surer verses in Section II of 'Song of Myself' "; ill. p. 25.

1979

REFERENCES: Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 203–204, ill. p. 202, repeats information from 1969 edition. // Robert McCracken Peck, "Thomas Eakins and Photography: The Means to an End," *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 9 (May 1979): 115: "It is not known how many projects Eakins may have had in mind when he arranged to take these action pictures, but it is clear that the bathing pictures were at least intended as studies for his commissioned painting *The Swimming Hole* (1883). So integral a part of his work did Eakins consider these on-location photographs, that he entered the expense of photographic equipment and carfare to the site in his accounts for the year." // Phyllis D. Rosenzweig, comp., *The Thomas Eakins Collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 49–52, repeats information from Rosenzweig's 1977 catalogue but includes two color fiche reproducing the Eakins material in the Hirshhorn collection.

1980

REFERENCE: John G. Lamb, Jr., "Eakins and the Arcadian Themes," in *Eakins at*

Avondale and Thomas Eakins: A Personal Collection (Chadds Ford, Pa.: Brandywine River Museum, 1980), pp. 19–20: "In a few of his works, notably *The Swimming Hole* . . . he allowed himself to show an almost sensual appreciation of the human body. . . . The disappearance of the Arcadian landscapes raises the broader question of why Eakins decided at this time to devote his full attention to portraiture. . . . [O]ne factor may have been the rejection of *The Swimming Hole* in 1885 by Edward Coates . . . who had originally commissioned the painting. The large number of photographs and oil sketches which exist for *The Swimming Hole* indicate that Eakins expended a great deal of effort upon the painting, and its rejection may help to explain the sudden disappearance of both nudes and outdoor genre scenes in his oeuvre. In a sense the Arcadian works act as an elegiac counterpoise to the celebration of physicality and nature which is evident in *The Swimming Hole*, and the contemporaneous appearance of these two differing outlooks suggests that Eakins' attitude toward nature and the rural landscape was complex, embodying the dual concepts of refuge and rejuvenation. Neither view was to continue in his art, for, soon after painting these works, Eakins began to devote his full attention to depicting, ever more forcefully, the personality and character of individual sitters."

1981

REFERENCES: Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Body: Images of the Nude* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), p. 108: "Eakins is using academic skills in a very different way [from Bouguereau]—he is determined to get as close as he can to observed reality, and at the same time to create an image which seems characteristically American. *The Swimming Hole* is one of the most powerful of all his compositions, and brings together a number of very different strands. . . . There are a number of half-hidden classical allusions—the reclining figure on the left is like the figures who fill the corners in the pediment of a Greek temple. But the total effect is almost aggressively realistic"; color ill. pp. 110–111. // Ellwood C. Parry III, *Photographer Thomas Eakins* (Philadelphia: Olympia Galleries, 1981), n.p., mentions that the Naked series photographs were found wrapped and addressed to Edward H. Coates, suggesting their possible relationship to Coates' rejection of *Swimming* and his involvement in Eakins' forced resignation from the Academy; nos. 38 and 42 are incorrectly identified as *Swimming* models Jesse Godley and George Reynolds, respectively, but no. 41 is correctly identified as model J. Laurie Wallace.

1982

EXHIBITED: Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Thomas Eakins: Artist of Philadelphia*, May 29–August 1, 1982, no. 100, cat. by Darrel Sewell. Traveled to Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Catalogue reference*: pp. 89–90: "In it [*Swimming*] Eakins may have seen the opportunity to reinterpret the archaic in modern terms. Instead of using an ancient theme as an excuse for painting nude figures, he chose a modern subject, but made the nude figures, in their poses, recall antique sculpture"; goes on to discuss Eakins' working methods, including the oil sketches, wax models, and photographs; discusses evolution of the finished painting and its troubled history: "After *The Swimming Hole*, Eakins never again used a nude figure in a landscape as the subject for a painting"; color ill. p. 91.

REVIEWS: Robert Hughes, "In Love with the Specific," *Time* 119, no. 23 (June 7, 1982): 65: "In order to fix the facts he loved—the blurred motion of a spoked wheel, the tilt of a catboat beating to windward, the awkward play of a naked boy's legs as he dives—Eakins produced a mass of preparatory work, in many mediums"; color ill. p. 65. // Margaret Kirk, "If This Painting Is So Great . . .," *Today* (the *Philadelphia Inquirer* magazine), May 30, 1982, p. 9: "As a painting, it [*Swimming*] might hardly seem the stuff of scandal. Yet when Edward Coates, the prominent Philadelphia art patron who had commissioned it, saw the finished product in 1885, he was so badly startled that he rejected it. Not only did the nudity unnerve him, but when he looked at the faces on those brawny naked bodies, Coates realized he knew these brazen men"; ill. pp. 8–9.

OTHER REFERENCES: Ann Davis, *A Distant Harmony: Comparisons in the Painting of Canada and the United States of America* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1982), p. 79: "In *The Swimming Hole* . . . nature is obviously important only insofar as it provides occasion for a figure composition of six unconcernedly nude men and dog; apart from adding important tonal harmonies, the background in this work is deliberately underplayed"; ill. p. 80. // Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 1982), 1:94: "In the finest of his outdoor paintings, *The Swimming Hole*, there is a perfect balance between the naked bathers and the secluded landscape setting"; p. 108: "Small wax models of the figures were sometimes made: . . . for *The Swimming*

Hole, the diver"; p. 237: "An even more direct contrast is presented by his next important work, *The Swimming Hole*: a group of real young men bathing in a real place—a subject as idyllic as *Arcadia*, but straight out of reality"; p. 239, quotes Anshutz' letter to J. Laurie Wallace: "'Eakins is painting a picture for Mr. Coates of a party of boys in swimming. . . . The figures are in the strongest relief of any of Eakins' outdoor paintings. They are completely in the round, solid, sculptural. Modeled with utmost precision, they have no trace of the softness of those in *Arcadia*; even at rest they give a sensation of vitality, of muscular energy. . . . The fact that the figures are naked, without distracting clothes, creates a plastic design whose purity and severity resemble a work of the Renaissance. The painting is Eakins' most masterful use of the nude, and the most finely designed of all his outdoor compositions. Compared to his pictures of half-naked oarsmen or his later prizefight pictures, *The Swimming Hole* gives the dominant role to the completely nude human body; it is pure creation in bodily forms. It reveals how portrayal of the nude could bring forth his full potentiality as a designer." In discussing its palette, Goodrich says that its "tonality is closer to that of Courbet than any other French realist of the period. But the painting has a direct visual realism, a precision, and a refinement that one does not find in Courbet. . . . The whole vision is closely related to photography, but the forms have a solidity and weight greater than the camera can achieve"; p. 240: "*The Swimming Hole* has complete unity: in forms, color, tonal values, and the relations of these elements to one another. The figures are perfectly related to their landscape setting. And the landscape itself has a subtlety and mellowness unusual with Eakins. The whole right-hand third, from the sky down through the distant woods and meadows to the beautifully painted water, is one of his richest pieces of painting. In a curious way it reminds one of a painter who was Eakins' complete opposite in almost every respect, Albert Ryder; it has a quality like the latter's most realistic work, *Weir's Orchard*: the sense of something seen in the real world, but transformed into the forms of art"; p. 241, discusses the photographs connected with the painting: "The similarities between photos and painting are in the place and the happening; but actually the differences are more revealing than the similarities, demonstrating the distinction between a raw slice of life and conscious design"; p. 243: "During the first half of the 1880s Eakins' art was expanding in several ways: in imaginative subjects such as *The Crucifixion* and the Arcadian subjects, even though they had no successors; in representing men at work in his shad-fishing pictures; in a new feeling for nature's changing aspects; in a freer use of the nude. And in *The Swimming Hole* his mastery of the human body and his feeling for nature were synthesized into his most completely realized outdoor composition"; p. 298: "The League's first curator, in charge of the premises, was George Reynolds. Older than the other students, he had served as a cavalry officer in the Civil War; his wife had died in 1882. About four years later Eakins painted him as *The Veteran*, a somber and moving portrait. He appeared in *The Swimming Hole* and in several motion photographs; in 1886 he had been a ringleader in the secession from the Academy"; p. 332: notes to p. 239 discuss account book entries related to *Swimming* and the identities of the figures; color fig. 107, details figs. 108-109; 2:52: "The Arcadian oils and reliefs had revealed an unexpected strain of pagan idyllic poetry; and *The Swimming Hole*, an actual contemporary Arcadia, had incarnated the beauty of the nude human body in nature"; p. 90: "In spite of Eakins' concentration on the nude in teaching and lecturing, he had pictured it only rarely, and the male somewhat more than the female nude: besides the half-naked bodies of oarsmen there had been *The Crucifixion*, the Arcadian oils and reliefs, and *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 148: "He had not painted the nude since *The Swimming Hole* of 1884–85 (except perhaps some small studies of female models)"; p. 247: "(So had [their backs to the viewer] most of the men in *The Swimming Hole*)"; p. 273: "The individual valuations make strange reading today, even allowing for the fact that appraisers of artists' estates customarily undervalue their works (fortunately for their widows); for example: *William Rush Carving* and *The Swimming Hole*, $25 each"; p. 275: "The Metropolitan exhibition, which opened November 5, 1917, consisted of sixty works: fifty-four oils and six watercolors. Forty-four pictures, almost three-quarters of the show, were owned by Mrs. Eakins, and included such major paintings as *Elizabeth at the Piano*, *Turning the Stake*, the 1877 *Rush*, *The Crucifixion*, *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 280: "By the mid-1920s museums and collectors were beginning to buy works, directly from Mrs. Eakins or through dealers. In 1925 the Fort Worth Art Association acquired *The Swimming Hole*."

1984

REFERENCES: Kate Kernan Rubin, "Thomas Eakins, *The Veteran*," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 21. "Two years prior to the date of *The Veteran*, he [George Reynolds] modeled for the figure of the diver in *The Swimming*

Hole"; ill. p. 21. // H. Barbara Weinberg, *The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1984), p. 43: "Though not noted by Ackerman, Eakins's academic tendencies are also clearly evident in such works as *The Swimming Hole*, a classical composition which depends upon a stable pyramid, reminiscent of a temple pediment. . . . The degree to which Eakins choreographs his bathers' activities in this painting is confirmed by consultation of his well-known candid photographs of his students at the site. . . . This coincidence of traditional and modern references—of an academic armature conjoined with the most modern, scientifically recorded actualities—is, indeed, the essence of Eakins' art and the key to his strength and enduring interest as a painter"; ill. p. 44.

1985

REFERENCE: John Wilmerding, "Walt Whitman and American Painting," *Antiques* 128, no. 5 (November 1985): 998ff.: "The artist and the poet have several qualities in common, and some of Eakins's works have clear correlations with Whitman's verse. . . . His *Swimming Hole* of 1884–1885 is often compared with these exuberant lines from *Song of Myself*: Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore / Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly"; color ill. p. 1001.

1986

REFERENCES: Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last One Hundred Years in the West* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 33–34: "*The Swimming Hole*, 1883 (Fort Worth Art Museum) is Eakins' most successful naturalistic composition combining close observation of the naked male body, arranged in a careful pyramid composition. At the tip of the pyramid a youth poses, a physical and symbolic demonstration of Eakins' own homoerotic interests. The painting's quality of wholeness and innocence is emphasized by the idyllic setting and the sheer pleasure of swimming and sunbathing in the nude. *The Swimming Hole* evokes the naked athletic comradeship of the Greek gymnasium, but with the additional sense of the relaxed human relationships being continuous with the idyllic natural setting. Such themes relate to Whitman's poem *Song of Myself* in which physical and emotional brotherly love is a perfectly natural expression of feeling"; ill. p. 35. // *Thomas Eakins: A Motion Portrait*, a film by T. W. Timreck (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art Home Video Collection, 1986), a documentary using actors, including a portrayal of Edward H. Coates, discusses *Swimming*, *The Pathetic Song*, and other circumstances surrounding Eakins' dismissal from the Pennsylvania Academy.

1987

REFERENCES: Michael Fried, *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 13, mentions *Swimming* as an important painting in which Eakins himself appears; p. 172, n. 59: "Another major painting by Eakins in which homoerotic fantasy would appear to be in play is of course *The Swimming Hole*"; ill. p. 14. // Marc Simpson, "Thomas Eakins and His Arcadian Works," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 74: "Another Pennsylvania Academy cast, *The Dying Gaul*, appears to provide the pose, reversed, for the reclining nude in *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 76: "Although an oil sketch of the female figure has been linked to other of Eakins's open-air studies, the palette is dominated by intense dark greens and earth tones and contains none of the bright yellow greens so important in his other sketches done at the Crowell farm, or in the contemporary outdoor study for *The Swimming Hole* (1883, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden)"; pp. 80–81: "The painting *Arcadia*—together with his largest and arguably most important paintings of the early 1880s, *The Crucifixion* (1880, Philadelphia Museum of Art) and *The Swimming Hole*—allow Eakins to explore the visual effects of sunshine on flesh, a primary concern in those years"; p. 82: "In his own work it was certainly the search for illusionistic mass, volume, or movement that prompted the sculpture associated with his *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River*, *A May Morning in the Park* (1879, Philadelphia Museum of Art), and the study, now lost, of the diving figure in *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 88: "The Arcadian canine is distinguished from other dogs that appear in his paintings of the early 1880s (see *Shad-Fishing at Gloucester on the Delaware River*, 1881, Philadelphia Museum of Art, *The Swimming Hole*, and *The Artist's Wife and His Setter Dog*), however, in that it does not portray Harry, Eakins's ubiquitous setter"; ill. p. 75.

1989

REFERENCES: Kathleen A. Foster and Cheryl Leibold, *Writing About Eakins: The*

Manuscripts in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1989), p. 172, cites letter from Coates to Eakins, November 27, 1885, in which Coates "praises the *Swimming* picture and requests the bill for it; proposes to take in its stead a picture more representative of TE's work for future addition to the Academy collection"; p. 300, reproduces a long letter from Mrs. Eakins to Mrs. Lewis R. Dick [c. 1930?], in which she describes Eakins' working methods: "In the picture *The Swimming Hole* Eakins modeled the diving figure in wax and then painted from it, making sketches on the spot, for color of flesh, the green, the water and the sky, on a sunny day." // Anne Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 375: "The thick emotional texture of *The Swimming Hole* was built up by Eakins through various kinds of study for it, which included photographs, models in wax, and oil sketches, a whole array of approaches to these boys he finally swims toward"; ill. p. 376. // Elizabeth Milroy, "'Consummatum est . . .': A Reassessment of Thomas Eakins's *Crucifixion* of 1880," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 2 (June 1989): 283: "In Paris, Eakins had become fully committed to the academic first principle that the human body was the supreme vehicle of artistic expression. He did not need an 'excuse' to paint the male nude. His *Swimming Hole*, painted in 1883, eloquently demonstrates that Eakins was very capable of devising original interpretations of this theme"; ill. p. 283.

1990

REFERENCES: *The Swimming Hole: A Civic Treasure*, 30-minute video produced by KXAS-TV, Channel 5, Fort Worth, Texas, September 1990, discusses the history of *Swimming* and its place in the cultural community of Fort Worth. // Jane Addams Allen, "The Sacred and the Profane," *New Art Examiner* 17, no. 11 (Summer 1990): 21: "*The Swimming Hole* was painted using photographs from one of these outings. In its way, it is as profound a tribute to the beauty of the human body as Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*. It makes an absolute mockery of the hallowed distinction between the naked and the nude. But the American public was not prepared for such realism. And the reality of the study behind the work proved even more disturbing"; ill. p. 19. // Randall C. Griffin, "Thomas Anshutz's *The Ironworkers' Noontime*: Remythologizing the Industrial Worker," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 4, no. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1990): 142: "Eakins's painting *The Swimming Hole* offers the most specific example of this [Whitmanesque hymns to the male body]. The scene encourages the viewer to engage in the act of pleasurable gazing at what Eakins felt was a higher form of beauty, the male nude. Returning to a primitive state of innocence, the swimmers are projections of boyhood fantasy, their nudity a potent symbol of male freedom, as found in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Photographs of Eakins's art students, taken by Eakins himself or under his direction, indicate that informing the Arcadian serenity and classical balance of his work were exuberant displays of athleticism. Anshutz's factory scene and Eakins's Arcadian swimming hole are alike in their celebrations of masculinity. The ironworkers heroically uphold a noble work ethic while Eakins's swimmers participate in an escapist world of male bonding"; ill. p. 140. // Charles A. Riley II, "Around the Block: Taking the Plunge," *Art & Auction* 12, no. 11 (June 1990): 22–28, discusses the acquisition of *Swimming* by the Amon Carter Museum from the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; color illus. on cover; see press clipping notebook at Amon Carter Museum for complete coverage of the acquisition. // Bailey Van Hook, "Decorative Images of American Women: The Aristocratic Aesthetic of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 59: "In a painting such as Eakins's *The Swimming Hole*, the deep, illusionistic space provides the athletic male figures with room to move"; ill. p. 58.

1992

REFERENCES: Sarah Cash, *American Art: Paintings from the Amon Carter Museum* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1992), p. 40: "Eakins' extensive study of the human form is evident in his masterpiece. . . . [He] carefully chose each figure's pose so that the group collectively represents a complete cycle of motion, from the swimming Eakins to the climbing, resting, standing, and finally diving figures. . . . Like his well-known portraits, *The Swimming Hole* unites classical inspiration with an unmistakably modern approach"; color ill. p. 41 // Allen Ellenzweig, *The Homoerotic Photograph: Male Images from Durieu/Delacroix to Mapplethorpe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 25: "There are other more exceptional instances that support a view of Eakins' perspective as being emotionally and frequently homoerotic—that is, admiring of and drawn to male beauty, prowess, and strength. They are the photographs that were preparatory to his masterful painting *The Swimming Hole*. . . . Where spirited adolescence with its implicit subtext of in-

nocent homosexual experiment is the currency of Sutcliffe's picture, *The Swimming Hole* images portray the vigorous jockeying of later development. As such, they are Whitmanesque allusions to manly physical self-possession and suggest an unfocused sexual longing and curiosity, in a sexually segregated environment, that is often the subtext in the drama of sporting activity among young males. These photographs and the canvas that was to emerge share almost perfectly the homoempathic sensibility that colors *Leaves of Grass*"; p. 31, discusses the classical allusions in the photographs and painting and their homoerotic quality, particularly the voyeuristic quality of Eakins' self-portrait; p. 34: "In Eakins' pictures, the exceptional concentration on the gestural poetics of the male figure, on tactile athletic experience, on compositional arrangements that place the erogenous parts of the male most on display—all these make of the male an object of beauty and a being with whom emotional, spiritual, and physical exchange is to be enthusiastically pursued"; ill. p. 28. // Byrne R. S. Fone, *Masculine Landscapes: Walt Whitman and the Homoerotic Text* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), p. 156: "Both Corvo and Hopkins, the former in *Ballad of Boys Bathing* (1890) and the latter in *Epithalamion* (1888), watch from a distance as handsome naked youths cavort in the water. Eakin's [*sic*] painting *The Swimming Hole* in fact shows the artist as observer of the scene"; ill. on cover. // William H. Gerdts, *Lasting Impressions: American Painters in France, 1865–1915* (Chicago: Terra Foundation for the Arts, 1992), p. 30, "The result of his French training is particularly evident in his paintings of athletes—swimmers, rowers, boxers, wrestlers, and baseball players—where Eakins's mastery of anatomy is especially evident, sometimes revealed in the nude male form, as, for example, in *The Swimming Hole*"; ill. p. 30. // William Innes Homer, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Art* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), pp. 113ff.: "Eakins's other major commission at this time, *The Swimming Hole*, was ordered by Edward H. Coates. . . . The location of this open-air scene has been identified as Bryn Mawr, a suburb of Philadelphia; that community is cited in Eakins's journal in connection with his preparations for *The Swimming Hole*. That the artist was faithful to the appearance of a specific place is attested by a group of photographs he took of the site, each showing a different combination of swimmers"; p. 116: "The painting expresses Eakins's own relaxed openness about the human body exposed fully and without embarrassment. . . . There is no evidence that Eakins was gay, but he encouraged a closeness among his male students and young artist friends that recalls the kind of bonding enjoyed in the Whitman circle. In fact, one of Eakins's students once referred to Eakins and his male friends as 'us Whitman fellows.'. . . In drawing and modeling these men, Eakins demonstrated his profound knowledge of anatomy, construction, and movement . . . yet their poses are oddly stiff and frozen, resembling academic studio studies. Especially rigid are the central bather, seated with his left arm raised, and the diving figure at the right. . . . There is an unhappy visual conflict between [the diver] and the reclining young man at the far left, the most calm and stable among them. It is as if the classical tradition of antiquity and the Renaissance has collided head-on with the scientific naturalism of the nineteenth century. Just as the figures seem overly studied and tightly drawn, so the water is brittle and lacking any sense of fluidity. Eakins was characteristically doctrinaire in calculating the reflections, so they look as though they were done with a straight edge. Coupled with this is a curious mismatch between the impression of strong light that falls on the nude bathers and the generally overcast atmosphere. It is as though these nudes had been abruptly transplanted from the studio into nature. Much more integrated and interesting as compositions are the two oil studies that Eakins made prior to undertaking the final work. . . . It is a shame that in his desire to be 'correct' in finishing the work in fine detail he lost the freshness that enlivens the studies"; color ill. p. 114. // Charles Sprawson, *Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), pp. 224–225: "The heroic attitudes of Catlin's Indian swimmers, the mythic atmosphere that surrounds them, are reproduced in the two great swimming scenes of American painting, by John Singleton Copley and Thomas Eakins. . . . In this almost visionary scene [*Swimming*], where the dark woods and sunlit fields slope down to the edge of the water, on whose sere surface the young men look down or penetrate it tentatively with their hands, the artist seems to be evoking the America that 'flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes', when 'for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent'. The 'waterhole' was to become an evocative symbol for Americans, the subject of numerous popular songs that expressed a longing to return to the innocence of youth. The painting was the last of an Arcadian interlude in Eakins' career, when he painted a series of Giorgionesque landscapes where naked boys play pipes by the edge of pools and young girls listen. These paintings were his only departure from a severely realistic style, and express his unconventional attitudes, his dissatisfaction with contemporary life and nostal-

gia for the freedom and unashamed nakedness of the pagan world. His experiences in the classical studios of Couture in Paris had left their mark. Eakins admired the Romans because 'they never became civilised'. He was always encouraging his pupils to swim naked, as so many of his photographs reveal"; p. 226, discusses his fascination and expertise in swimming; p. 227, discusses Whitman's affection for swimming; pl. 16.

1993

REFERENCES: [Doreen Bolger], "Original Frame Reunited with *The Swimming Hole*," Amon Carter Museum *Program* (January–June 1993), p. 23, discusses the discovery of the original frame for *Swimming*; color ill. p. 22. // Eric Gibson, "What a Difference a Frame Makes," *The Art Newspaper* 25, no. 4 (February 1993): 8, announces the discovery of the original frame for *Swimming*; ill. p. 8. // Jennifer Hardin, "Thomas Eakins and the Nude," *Antiques* 144, no. 5 (November 1993): 708: "Several scholars have noted the classical foundation of Eakins's art, and some have made a more detailed exploration of his interest in the classical tradition. In these discussions, the painter's *Swimming Hole* is usually seen as his visual manifesto because of its masterful synthesis of real and classical elements. It depicts an everyday event in an actual place, but the figures convey a mood of static timelessness that recalls classical reliefs"; color ill. p. 713. // Michael Hatt, "The Male Body in Another Frame: Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* as a Homoerotic Image," *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts: The Body* (London: The Academy Group, 1993), p. 9: "The evidence that suggests that the picture may have been controversial coupled with the absence of any documentation is tantalizing and frustrating. Art historians have assumed that the painting and its subject strained the limits of acceptability in late 19th-century Philadelphia, and that the use of the male nude in the representation of the homosocial is, at base, what consigned *The Swimming Hole* to a basement for so many years. . . . Not only do I want to deal with the silences of the late 19th-century, but I also want to challenge the views of the image that have become commonplace in recent publications"; pp. 9–10, discusses treatment of Eakins' sexuality in recent publications [Lucie-Smith, Fried, Cooper, et al.], links with Whitman's acknowledged homosexuality, and attempts to deny Eakins' homosexuality; p. 11, in defining homoeroticism: "In *The Swimming Hole*, a different environment, also homosocial, appears to operate a comparable visual economy. The naked male body is displayed for a male audience. The bathers might also catch themselves admiring the frames of their comrades. . . . To call *The Swimming Hole* homoerotic is to permit the possibility it presents of male pleasure in the male body"; p. 15: "I want to argue that Eakins' attempts to contain desire, the strategies he adopted to legitimise his use of the nude, were, for his contemporaries, invalid. He failed in respect of all four strategies outlined above [p. 13]: *The Swimming Hole* resists discursive rationalisation, acceptable modes of spectatorship, aestheticisation, and reading in terms of power"; pp. 16–18, discusses the social framework surrounding Eakins' outdoor activities as well as style arguments in comparing the photographs with the painting and its categorization as a realist painting; p. 19: "While it may seem that to read the instruction 'Feel the model' into this painting is methodologically unsound, the economy of gazes in and around the painting appears to support such an analysis. Within the frame of the painting the visual economy does not seem to relate to any established economy of power. There is no hierarchy to determine who can look at whom and with what authority. Instead, looks can be exchanged freely, and no single gaze need defer to any other. . . . Swimming towards the men on the shore, his [Eakins'] gaze is the one that is directed; artist and viewer, he simply looks, and in doing so problematises the homosocial gaze. The arrangement of the bodies emphasises that they are there to be looked at. The poses emphasise display, variety, motion, and invite pleasure more than anything else. . . . Whether or not Eakins represents his own desire here, consciously or unconsciously, as debates around the picture have assumed or tried to ascertain, is not really the point. The painting remained for its audience one which made too clear the function of the homoerotic. The *Swimming Hole* described too clearly the border between the licit and the illicit, between beauty and obscenity. It moves from the first definition of homoerotic, as controlling desire in order to maintain a separation of homosocial and homosexual, to the second, a discourse on the first. In this it proves to be transgressive. The gaze it invites—the male gaze on the male body—is offered no context for enjoyment other than delight in the body itself. The male nude is insufficient as a frame if there is no legitimate reason for nudity. The point is this: the homoerotic is acceptable—indeed, necessary—but to name it is not"; p. 20: "To summarise, homoeroticism needs to be theorised as both a means of keeping the homosocial and the homosexual apart, of marking the visible relations between men, and as a discourse which reveals those limits and what lies beyond them . . . In

Eakins' painting, this breaks down into the second, and the tenuous division held in place by the homoerotic becomes visible. The image is therefore deviant"; color ill. p. 8. // Turk Pipkin and Marshall Frech, eds., *Barton Springs Eternal: The Soul of a City* (Austin, Tex.: Softshoe Publishing, 1993), p. 98: "The citizens of Dallas and Fort Worth recently raised $10 million to rescue and preserve Thomas Eakins's painting *The Swimming Hole*. If a painting of a swimming hole is worth that kind of money, what value can we place on the real thing? Some people say Barton Springs is only a swimming pool. In fact, it's a unique and irreplaceable treasure worth more than any economist could ever figure"; ill. p. 99. // Henry M. Reed, *The A. B. Frost Book* (Charleston, S.C.: Wyrick & Company, 1993), pp. 29–30: "In 1883, Eakins began his painting *The Swimming Hole* with a series of photographs and an oil sketch depicting himself and a group of his students swimming in the nude. According to author Gordon Hendricks, in his book, *The Life and Works of Thomas Eakins* (New York: Grossman), 1974, Frost can be identified as the redhead in the foreground with his left arm holding onto the rock ledge. Eakins can be recognized as the swimmer in the lower right. Lloyd Goodrich, also the author of two definitive books on Eakins, disagrees, stating in a footnote that Frost was unavailable as a model for the work because he was married in 1883 and moved to Huntington, New York. Goodrich assigns a date of 1884–1885 to the completed *The Swimming Hole*. However, the initial photographs and oil sketch for the work (now in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution) were done in 1883, when Frost lived in Philadelphia and could have been one of the models. Whether or not Frost permitted himself to be photographed in a nude bathing picture with several other Eakins students (in addition to Frost, Hendricks lists J. Laurie Wallace, George Reynolds, Jesse Godley, Eakins himself, and his dog Harry), he seems not to have taken his teacher's nude photography or figure painting very seriously"; p. 35: "Gordon Hendricks, in his biography of Eakins, wrote: 'Arthur B. Frost, the redhead in *The Swimming Hole*, who was always reluctant to give Eakins credit for teaching him anything, was the subject of two portraits'"; ill. p. 29. // John Wilmerding, ed., *Thomas Eakins and the Heart of American Life* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1993), pp. 26–27: "The early eighties, too, saw the production of a few pure landscapes. These visual currents culminate with *The Swimming Hole* of 1883, a scene of Eakins and his male students skinny-dipping in an idyllic rural landscape. Its sense of portraiture and frozen poses derives from preparatory photographic studies made on the spot, at the same time that its solid triangular composition of rhythmically arranged male nudes alludes to the casts Eakins knew of ancient sculpture, friezes, and pedimental fragments. Yet its celebration of freely expressed sexuality and the benign sunlit landscape were to have an elegiac finality"; p. 28: "To escape the strain and conflict, Eakins travelled west to the Dakota territories in 1887, and the one last landscape he painted then, *Cowboys in the Bad Lands* (Private Collection), is of a mood altogether different from *The Swimming Hole* of four years earlier"; p. 101, n. 10: "Although Eakins further observed that 'our business is to do something exclusively for ourselves, not to copy Phidias', he did on several occasions pose figures in his works in ways that strongly recall antique sculptures. Perhaps the most obvious instance of this is the pediment-like arrangement of the figures in *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 104: "Eakins had been commissioned by the director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at the time, Edward Horner [*sic*] Coates, to paint *The Swimming Hole*. Upon seeing the completed work, however, Coates was so taken aback by its flagrant nudity that he bought *The Pathetic Song* instead"; p. 109: "As early as 1883, Eakins painted *The Swimming Hole*, a bold, direct representation of nude male bathers that comes very close to the spirit of companionship advocated in Whitman's poetry, yet the canvas predates their meeting by four years"; p. 113: "Many of Eakins's masterpieces in this period, such as *The Swimming Hole*, *The Bohemian*, *The Crucifixion*, and the portrait of Amelia Van Buren, depict students for whom modelling was an intrinsic part of their instruction as fledgling artists"; p. 137: "The influence of photography manifested itself in his compelling work *The Swimming Hole*, begun in 1883, and then again in the boxing series. The human figure was manipulated into the greatest variety of poses, by which Eakins captured the action and suspended it in time"; p. 163: "*The Swimming Hole* shows a diver arched midway between rock and water. The swift motion, though implied, is frozen, as though forever. This snapshot effect, borrowed from the newly developed techniques of stop-motion photography, clearly fascinated Eakins"; p. 182: "Photographic studies for paintings such as *The Swimming Hole* and the Arcadia subjects, although not strictly portraits, are images whose human subjects are clearly identifiable"; ill. p. 26.

1994

REFERENCES: Claire M. Barry and Doreen Bolger, "Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming*

Hole," *American Art Review* 6, no. 5 (October–November 1994): 102–103, 172–173, discuss the cleaning and restoration of *Swimming* by Claire Barry in consultation with Doreen Bolger, including new discoveries about the painting's history and intent; color ill. pp. 102–103. // Doreen Bolger and Claire M. Barry, "Thomas Eakins's *Swimming Hole*," *Antiques* 145, no. 3 (March 1994): 408–411, is a shorter version of the authors' article in the October-November 1994 *American Art Review*; color ill. pp. 408–409. // *Lawrence S. Cunningham and Hohn J. Reich, Culture and Vlues: A Survey of the Western Humanities*, 3d ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994), p. 459: "Eakins used realism as a means of achieving objective truth. His pursuit of scientific accuracy led him to make a particular study of the possibilities of photography. Animals and, more particularly, humans in motion continually fascinated him. This trait can be observed in *The Swimming Hole*, where the variety of poses and action produces a series of individual anatomical studies rather than a unified picture"; ill. p. 460 in color. // Susan Danly and Cheryl Leibold, *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994), p. 4: "By 1883 Eakins had produced two more series of photographs related to paintings—photographs demonstrating that he had begun to view them as both preliminary studies and works of art. In comparison with his Gloucester series, the photographs of students posing nude for the *Arcadia* and *Swimming Hole* subjects are more thoughtfully composed and lighted; and their proportions are more in keeping with the paintings to which they relate. These nude studies are, significantly, among the works that exist as large platinum prints. Whereas Eakins's earliest photographs had been relatively simple albumen contact prints—that is, the same size as the four-by-five-inch negatives—the *Arcadia* and *Swimming Hole* prints cover a wider range of sizes and media. With these images he truly began to experiment with the aesthetic potential of photography"; p. 9: "In 1878 [John C.] Browne discovered a rocky promontory at Mill Creek, the same site that Eakins later photographed and painted in *The Swimming Hole*"; p. 16: "The Eakins photographs that are related to paintings and sculpture subtly changed the function of the photographic study. Painters before him had used the photograph as an aide-mémoire, but Eakins's photographic experience often seemed to inspire or reinvigorate a theme in his painting. The photographs of the Swimming Hole, William



Thomas Eakins, *Rock Thrower*, c. 1883, albumen print, 3⅝ x 2 in. (irreg.), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, transferred from Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Archives, 1983, HMSG 83.19

Rush, and Arcadia subjects are not simply visual aids. They altered the way in which the artist viewed the very meaning of those works"; p. 50: "Eakins's outdoor photographic studies, unlike the interior views, seem to be more for personal than pedagogic use. Many of those in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts are related to his arcadian paintings of 1883, or to *The Swimming Hole*. . . . Eakins was in effect using the photographs as the equivalent of experimental sketches and resolving the composition only when back in the studio"; p. 51, discusses the plein-air nude photographs related to *Swimming*, e.g.: "In the photograph that best approximates the oil, Eakins directed his models to look away from the camera and the sun and to hold poses while the shutter was released"; p. 57: "If any proof were needed that Eakins aligned himself with liberal factions in Philadelphia both before and after his tenure at the Pennsylvania Academy, it could be found in the subjects that he chose to make the focus of his art. As vociferously as Josiah Leeds and Anthony Comstock attacked nudity, prize fighting, theaters, ballet, Sunday bathing, French art, Walt Whitman, and honesty in regard to bodily functions, Eakins championed them in paint and photography. The human body, whether sedated under the scalpel of Dr. Gross, relaxing in Arcadia, lounging by a river, or stretching in a boxing ring, confronts the viewer with all its strengths and faults, its bulging biceps and bony elbows. Selecting a medium identified with unvarnished truth, Eakins used the camera to celebrate the variety of the 'most beautiful of Nature's works,' as he wrote in his defense in 1886. The body, which Woodhull and Claflin called the 'garden of Eden,' was similarly for Eakins the symbol of a purer life before the Fall—a world in which men and women had lived without the weight of sin and false modesty"; pp. 86ff., discusses the outing to Mill Creek near Bryn Mawr, resulting in the *Swimming* series, e.g.: "Whereas the camera activity at Manasquan was in a familiar place, the swimming and photography excursion to Bryn Mawr may well have been a unique trip and a different kind of photographic fantasy—one that recreates the atmosphere of Plato's Academy"; pp. 196–197, catalogues the photographs related to *Swimming*. // Whitney Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301: "I will ask how Eakins partly fulfilled his wishes by retrospectively revising their repression toward a partial discharge in representation"; p. 304, introduces the Freudian term *Nachträglichkeit* (delayed activation); pp. 305–308, discusses traits of Whitman that Eakins would have admired and shared; pp. 308–309, discusses not only Eakins' readiness to depict the 'loving comradeship' Whitman imagined but also his tentativeness in the subject matter; pp. 310ff.: "But unity and realism are the last words that should be applied to it [*Swimming*]. It is, instead, an extraordinarily divided work based, it seems, on a series of fantasies and countering these, artificial views—naturalistic in procedure but certainly not 'realist' in origin—constructed to paper over its several fissures"; pp. 311–314, discusses the geographical and social context of the site of *Swimming*: "*The Swimming Hole* was at least partly an image of a place where remembered, imagined and claimed masculine innocence—about nature, property, industry, companionship, change—could be reconstructed and reflected back to a man as a picture of what, supposedly, he really wants"; pp. 314–317, discusses the post–Civil War physical culture movement and its manifestation in *Swimming*, but resulting in conflict with Coates: "In completing his painting in this culturally conflicted scene of representation, Eakins went much further than Coates expected, delving into the patron's fantasy with (for Coates) shocking realism, and crafting his own 'realism' in the image of a shocking fantasy—so shocking he could not sustain it through pictorial revision"; pp. 317ff., discusses in detail the evolution of various photographs related to outdoor nudity and *Swimming*, as directed by Eakins; pp. 324ff., goes on to discuss the oil studies, noting their evolution from the photographs; p. 328, comments on the final version: "The painting's reorganization in 1884–85, then, was not merely the elimination of frontal nudity. It was, more important, a resetting of the narrative. Specifically, I think, Eakins attempted to transform 'fervid comradeship' into 'general politics', revising the indecency of the boys' hierarchical society toward the democratic decency imagined in acceptable fantasies"; pp. 330–331, discusses *Swimming* in the context of men, not boys: "setting aside care to become, once more, like carefree boys. . . . For this group, the fresh air of the pond is fresh precisely because here there is no smell of death"; p. 332: "The painting itself is, finally, not the 'end' nor resolution of this sequence. The painter does not know what resolution he desires until, retrospectively, he sees what his prospectively surging desires have enabled him to achieve; and then, of course, he does not want it. The painting is merely the relay that permits him to hold together and go on"; ill. p. 312. // Linda Nochlin, "Issues of Gender in Cassatt and Eakins," in Stephen F. Eisenman, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), pp. 258–259, compares Eakins' and Cassatt's subject matter: "Often, it is a difference

created by the subjects male and female artists were encouraged, or permitted, to paint. Gender difference is easiest to discern when a simple opposition in iconography is involved: young men and boys swimming naked out of doors in Eakins' *Swimming Hole* versus ladies taking tea in an elegant parlor in Cassatt's *Five O'-Clock Tea*. But even where it is simply a question of quintessentially 'male' versus 'female' subject matter, the issue is complicated. Are Eakins' naked men versus Cassatt's tea-drinking ladies reducible to a mere question of gender, to what is permitted to or socially acceptable for the male artist versus the female one? Isn't the issue of class also implicated, or even the artist's relationship to the social order as a totality? Eakins' *Swimming Hole* projects a heady sense of escape from social constraint through sheer bodily freedom. The youthful male nudes, including Eakins himself in the foreground, are presented modestly, from the back or with strategically bent leg, in the classical *Dying Gaul* posture, and evoke moral qualities of honesty and purity in the out-of-doors context. In other words, in the Eakins painting, democratic freedom is signified by the youthful male American body in the American landscape: to be American is at once to be natural and to have a privileged relation to Nature"; illus. p. 256. // Adam Gopnik, "Eakins in the Wilderness," *The New Yorker* 70, no. 43 (December 26, 1994–January 2, 1995), p. 80, notes how little attention Eakins has gotten recently, in spite of new scholarship and discoveries: "This may be because, for reasons that are as significant of our time as the scandals were of his, nobody knows what to do with Eakins now: the new picture of him is not one that fits easily into any of the prefabricated slots of the postmodern imagination"; p. 87: "The homoerotic content of Eakins' work is evident. There are two paintings, in particular, in which a desire for the male body seems to become the picture's essential subject: *Arcadia*, of 1883, and the much better *The Swimming Hole*, which he also finished in 1883, just before the scandals began to break around his head. These pictures possess (and are possessed by) a vein of homoerotic poetry, and not just because they contain naked men and boys. The poetry is created, first of all, by their stillness—a stillness that was achieved in part by Eakins' endless preparatory photographic studies, and a stillness that also, as so often in painting, seems closely allied to longing. . . . They [the photographs] have a pensive, slow-motion softness that got a little lost when they were translated into the crisp realism of the finished *The Swimming Hole*; the photographs have the other-worldliness of art, while the painting looks a little too photographic. The atmosphere of sexual desire in *The Swimming Hole* is articulated in the swimmers' poses, and especially in the hand-on-hip, thrust-buttock pose of the beautiful nude male at the apex of the compositional pyramid. It is a pose that has been identified as a kind of secret marrano code, representing—to those in the know—male love in a culture that forbids it. . . . All Eakins' studies of the male nude have about them—in their seductive hush, even their simple frontality—a powerful charge of desire, and you can argue that the Philadelphia bourgeoisie, sensing the presence of a code, even if they couldn't figure out the precise meaning of the message, acted oppressively. They knew that there was an Other in there somewhere, and they threw it out." // Andrew Hemingway, "Critical Realism in the History of American Art," in *Visions of America Since 1492* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 123: "Eakins associated beauty not with ideal form, but with the realities of sensual knowledge. This attitude is most clearly suggested in his picture *The Swimming Hole*, which depicts six contemporary male figures, playing naked outdoors. In his Paris years, Eakins had fantasized about painting 'the most beautiful thing there is', a 'naked man', and *The Swimming Hole* can be read as his riposte to the 'smirking goddesses' among 'delicious arsenic green trees and gentle wax flowers' he detested so much at the salons." // Janet Tyson, "A Cleanup Effort," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 9, 1994, Section F, pp. 1, 6, discusses the cleaning and restoration of *Swimming* by Claire Barry in consultation with Doreen Bolger, including a chronology of the process; color ill. p. 1, with detail. // H. Barbara Weinberg, "Thomas Eakins and The Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 52, no. 3 (Winter 1994–95): 15: "The friezelike choreography, classical composition, sharp focus, firm brushwork, and finely articulated detail and surface [in *Pushing for Rail*] recall Eakins's academic lessons and anticipate similar elements in such paintings as *The Swimming Hole*."

1995

REFERENCES: Arthur C. Danto, "Men Bathing, 1883: Eakins and Seurat," *ARTNews* 94, no. 3 (March 1995): 95: "In 1883 the artists Thomas Eakins and Georges Seurat, neither one part of the other's world, each executed a major painting that showed a group of men at a bathing place. . . . The nakedness of Eakins's sporting men . . . is the mark of their being at play and away from work. Here there are no class distinctions. Indeed, one feels, the absence of clothing is a metaphor for the proposition

that all men are created equal, inequality being something we put on and take off with our garments. Moreover, the men have left responsibility behind—as personified by the absent women—and their nakedness, unacceptable in female company, is a mark of being men together. They are naked in the great outdoors, having a good time. . . . It is always interesting to inquire of a painting, whether it actually belongs to the reality it projects. . . . His painting shows a Whitmanesque world . . . but it is hard to see the painting as a Whitmanesque object. It belongs in a parlor, in a gilded frame, and it suggests the life from which the bathers are truant. One is certain that it was executed indoors, in the studio, by a master of naturalistic representation: whatever it depicts, it breathes the values of the academy"; p. 96: "What is especially haunting in *The Swimming Hole* is the way it uses ideas that gave rise to a technique of representation capable of showing directly something painting could only imply. Eakins's use of techniques influenced by photography as a means to further artistic fidelity ironically contributed to the progress of a technology that would undermine the idea of verisimilitude in painting. Like Seurat, in the end, he was subverting what he believed was the task of art, making way for a kind of painting neither could have imagined, and necessitating a philosophy of art to replace the one each lived by. The future cast its shadow over these two great paintings of 1883, but no one was able to see it"; color ill. p. 95. // Randall C. Griffin, "Thomas Eakins' Construction of the Male Body, or 'Men Get to Know Each Other Across the Space of Time,'" *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 70–80: p. 70: "This essay will argue that traditional stylistic and iconographic readings of the painting, as well as recent psychosexual interpretations, have virtually ignored what is central to the picture, namely, that *The Swimming Hole* was Eakins' assertion, staged appropriately in a mock 'ancient Greek' setting, of the superiority of *man* as both principal maker of art and its ideal model."; p. 72: "*The Swimming Hole* should be understood, in part, as both a summary of Eakins' teaching philosophy concerning the sanctity and perfection of the male body and as an obvious challenge to the late nineteenth-century dominance of the female figure among nudes."; p. 74: "Indeed, the picture presents a lucid allegory of art. Its harmonious pyramidal composition, studio poses, and analytical artistic method can be seen as evidence of art's perceived transformation of raw 'feminine' nature or matter into a higher 'male' state of order, transcendent beauty, and Apollonian reason. Eakins' self-image in the scene thus demonstrates his place as both observer and creator, an artist 'elevating' the ordinary into the domain of the symbolic and the ideal."; p. 76: "*The Swimming Hole* differed from . . . other images in its depiction of nude middle-class white men, which made it a disquieting site of sexual ambiguity rather than an evocation of racial or class-based otherness. The scene encourages a scopophilic objectification of the body in which a male erotic gaze is naturalized."; p. 78: "*The Swimming Hole* was meant as an allegory of art's 'masculine' transformative process, something resembling Romantic concepts of the artist as emulator of God the creator"; ill. p. 70.

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